AN EXAMINATION OF RUDOLF FORST'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO TWENTIETH-CENTURY SOLO HARP LITERATURE

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Chapter One

Introduction

Throughout the past several years, I have developed an ever-deepening interest in exploring lesser-known works for solo harp literature; works that have been overlooked by harpists, either because they failed to gain popularity during the time in which they were written, or were overshadowed by the works of other composers. As I explored this lesser-known body of literature, some works made obvious the reason for their neglect, while others demonstrated their composers' remarkable understanding of the instrument and featured characteristics that make them intriguing and highly playable, even several decades after they were written.

An Overlooked Body of Literature

It is unfortunate that with the ever-growing amount of new repertoire harpists have at their disposal, there is also a large amount of repertoire that is at risk of becoming permanently lost to the annals of time. This body of overlooked literature is far larger than one might imagine. In my own research there always seems to be something new to discover, to the extent that the task of sifting through volumes of lesser-known works (many of which are also unrecorded) can seem daunting at times. Additionally, when considering that many harpists, out of necessity, invest a great deal of time and energy into performing and teaching the standard repertoire, orchestral excerpts, pedagogical materials, and chamber literature, the neglect of lesser-known works becomes understandable.

In this dissertation, I shall present my case for exploring this body of overlooked literature and why I believe it is important not to allow these works to become further obscured. First, while it is important to have a standard body of works that harpists are expected to learn, I also believe that there are lesser-known works that are equally worthy of being studied and

added to the standard repertoire. It is true that many obscure works are ignored for a reason; they are too experimental in nature, they are written in a way that is not idiomatic for the harp, or they have simply not aged well throughout the years. Many of these works were written by composers who were not well trained in writing for the harp, incorporating effects that are not appropriate or even possible on the harp. However, despite the large number of compositions that are of mediocre quality, there also remain numerous works that are hidden gems, waiting to be brought to light.

Second, these works, regardless of how obscure they may seem, are part of the harpist's history. They showcase the compositional styles of composers of the time, reveal how they approached the instrument, and provide clues as to how the literature evolved through the years. With this historical framework in mind, it is my belief that the longer these works remain unexplored, the harder it will become to learn much about them beyond their basic elements and the names of their composers. Already, many of the pieces that I have found in my research are no longer available for purchase, though online digital archives, such as the American Composers Alliance, offer scores for sale. Library music collections and digital archives are slowly becoming the most accessible way of obtaining out-of-print scores, though these resources are not always available to every harpist.[1] It is possible to obtain scores from harpists who may have purchased them when they were first available, but locating them can be time-consuming. Even if access to works were not a concern, information about their composers may not be widely available, especially for those who were lesser known. Such information can provide insights into performance practices and help to place the pieces into the context of the time period in which they were written.

[1] I have had mixed results with each of these methods of score retrieval. I have been able to purchase a few of my scores from distributors, while others have had to be borrowed through Interlibrary Loan.

One representative of this second point is Rudolf Forst (1900-1973), an American composer from New York and the focus of this dissertation. While some basic biographical information regarding Forst and his works exists, there is nothing that discusses his musical style, nor have many of his works been recorded for public distribution. Another example is Walter Mourant (1911-1995), another American composer whose career overlapped with Forst's, extending into the 1980s and '90s. Similarly, aside from basic biographical information, very little discussion of his music exists, though his music is more well-known by modern musicians. It should be noted that neither one of these composers wrote exclusively for the harp, but they produced up to six or seven works for solo harp, a relatively high number given the diversity of their productivity. Other composers who are better known also produced lesser-known harp works, including Halsey Stevens (1908-1989).

A third consideration concerns the periods throughout the twentieth century in which American composers were producing works for the harp. In glancing through the list of lesser-known works (see Appendix A), it seems that, although American composers were actively writing for harp since the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the works that are still performed today were written in the latter half of the century. Apart from the works of Alan Hovhaness and a few other composers, there were few innovative works for the solo harp that were written by American-born composers during the period between 1900 and 1940; most of the major contributions to the repertoire during those decades were written by European-born composers. This apparent lack of American-composed solo harp works was noted by Carlos Salzedo (1885-1961) in an edition of *Eolus* from 1927, in which Salzedo lamented that only a few American composers were writing works for the harp that could match the productivity of

their European contemporaries.[2] Salzedo also criticized the general attitude of apathy that he believed American composers had toward experimentation in harp music, fearing that American composers would be excluded from other long-standing musical circles if such trends continued. While perhaps overly dramatic in its wording, Salzedo's argument is not entirely unwarranted. Early composers of harp music in the United States tended to produce works written with Romantic-era traditions, imitating the styles of composers such as Alphonse Hasselmans, Elias Parish Alvars, and others with similar style. Transcriptions of popular works were also in vogue amongst harpists, and within the early twentieth century, much of the music written for harp was relatively unremarkable.[3] Only the French-American composer, Salzedo, and composers in Europe were making efforts to incorporate modern compositional techniques into their harp works, and, even then, the harp was still plagued by stereotypical ideals regarding its sound and capabilities.[4] It was not until the 1940s and '50s that more American composers began experimenting with their writing for the harp.

Rudolf Forst

As stated above, the process of sifting through volumes of unfamiliar music can be overwhelming. There are many solo harp works that are seemingly not well known by harpists. For my research, I have opted to focus on the works of one particular composer, Rudolf Forst, while making note in Appendix A of other American-born composers who have contributed to solo harp literature. Although Forst's solo harp works make up a relatively small portion of the literature, this narrow focus provides a clear sense of direction when encountering volumes of unfamiliar works and establishes a foundation for research that can be expanded upon later.

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[2] Carlos Salzedo, "Yes, We Have No Composers," *Eolus* 4, no. 1 (1927): 26-27.
[3] Rosalyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1989), 230.
[4] Kirsty Whatley, "Rough Romance: Sequenza II for Harp as a Study and Statement," in *Berio's Sequenzas,* ed. Janet K. Halfyard (Hampshire, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007), 41.

Thus, we arrive at our discussion of Forst. While several other American, mid-twentieth-century composers could have been a suitable choice, Forst is a more unusual case, as will be explained below, and one that merits an investigation of this nature. There are general details regarding Forst's life that can be easily found. Forst was born in New York City, New York, in 1900 and received all of his musical instruction there, studying violin, piano, and, later, composition. He was a student of Daniel Gregory Mason at Columbia University, where he completed his post-graduate work.[5] He spent a few years as an instructor of violin at the New York College of Music and was an active orchestral musician, serving as principal violinist for one of Quinto Maganini's chamber orchestras.[6] He was also an editor for Editions Musicus, where he worked with Maganini, and where much of his music was published.[7] According to his obituary, he was married to Daisy Smith and had one daughter, Dorothy Walton. Forst died in 1973 in Grassland Meadows Hospital in Valhalla, New York.[8]

At first glance, this information seems rather unremarkable, but there are clues within scattered writings that make Forst stand out amongst his contemporaries. While his obituary and biography state that he stayed in New York State his entire life, he garnered an extraordinarily wide network of connections. Forst had several prominent connections with notable conductors, including Quinto Maganini and Alfred Wallenstein, both of whom programmed his works on their concerts.[9] Wallenstein, who was the music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, also

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[5] Clare Reis, "Rudolf Forst," in *Composers in America* (New York: MacMillan, 1947), 125.
[6] Gordon Skene, "1936 Music Guild Awards 3rd Prize: Past Daily Weekend Gramophone," January 10, 2019, in *Past Daily*, archive, mp3 audio, 24:59, https://pastdaily.com/2016/01/10/1936-music-guild-awards-3rd-prize-past-daily-weekend-gramophone/.
[7] "Forst Biography," annotated, photocopy of a typed document, with hand-written edits by Lucile Lawrence, in the possession of Elizabeth Richter, Muncie, IN; Michael Meckna, "Maganini, Quinto," *Grove Music Online,* accessed October 20, 2019, https://doi-org.proxy.bsu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.17431/.
[8] "Rudolf Forst," *New York Times*, December 22, 1973, accessed October 21, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/1973/12/22/archives/rudolf-forst.html.
[9] "Forst Biography"; Skene, "1936 Music Guild Awards."

premiered Forst's Cello Concerto, with George Neikrug as the soloist.[10] One source briefly indicates that Forst was at one time corresponding with Leonard Bernstein as well.[11] Forst's trio, *Dialogue* (1941) for flute, viola, and harp, was dedicated to Elizabeth Sprague-Coolidge, a well-known pianist and arts advocate during the twentieth century, who had connections to several other composers of harp works, including Carlos Salzedo and Marcel Grandjany.[12] Forst was heavily involved in radio work, which led him to be engaged by Erno Rapée for Radio City Music Hall during the 1930s.[13] He also had connections with Lucile Lawrence, who was the staff harpist for Radio City Music Hall during the 1930s, and with Salzedo, both of whom may have had a direct influence on his writing for the harp.[14]

In addition to his prominent musical connections, Forst's music seemed highly regarded at the time, with his String Quartet No. 1 earning third place in NBC's Music Guild Awards, culminating in a live radio premiere by the Gordon String Quartet in 1937.[15] Salzedo was apparently fond of Forst's *Homage to Ravel* (1941), and urged Forst to produce more works for solo harp.[16] And yet Forst's music fell to the wayside, becoming obscured throughout the years. Apart from a recording of his first string quartet that can be heard on a digital copy of the original radio broadcast from 1937 on *Past Daily* and a CD from 2005, *Looking Glass River* (see Bibliography under "R"), which features two of Forst's solo harp works, there are seemingly no

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[10] "Alfred Wallenstein, The Conductor, Dies at 84," *The New York Times*, February 10, 1983, accessed October 20, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/1983/02/10/obituaries/alfred-wallenstein-the-conductor-dies-at-84.html; "Forst Biography."
[11] Paul Laird, "Research Aids," in *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 250.
[12] "Forst Biography"; Marietta Bitter and Saul Davis Zlatkovski, *Pentacle* (Lake Tapps: Salzedo Committee of the American Harp Society, 2010), 222; Grandjany's *Aria in a Classical Style* is dedicated to Elizabeth Sprague-Coolidge, which is denoted at the top of the first page.
[13] "Forst Biography."
[14] Martha Woodward, "Lawrence, Lucile," *Grove Music Online*, accessed October 23, 2019, https://doi-org.proxy.bsu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2285159; Rudolf Forst, *From a Railway Carriage*, (Hudson: Edition Musicus, 1941).
[15] Skene, "1936 Music Guild Awards."
[16] Forst, *From A Railway Carriage.*

other recordings of his works that are available. His orchestral and choral works are hardly ever programmed, which is noteworthy when considering that his works were frequently programmed and premiered by Wallenstein, Maganini, and other conductors during his lifetime. He also produced several choral and vocal works, demonstrating that he was a prolific composer.

Another aspect of Forst's career that is less-understood than his music is his artwork. Forst was a painter and produced several pieces of artwork that were said to have garnered international acclaim, being displayed in galleries throughout the United States and Europe, as well as being included as a part of a permanent collection at the Safad Museum in Israel.[17] As of the year 2020, only one of his pieces could be located. Entitled "Green Fields," it dates from around the mid-1960s, and currently sits in the shop of an art dealer in Hudson, New York (see fig. 1.1).[18]

Fig. 1.1: Rudolf Forst, *Green Fields,* circa late-1960s. Located in Hudson, New York. Photo used with permission of owner.

[17] "Forst Biography."

[18] The art dealer, who generously granted permission to use an image of the painting, also remarked that the painting was to be hung horizontally (with Forst's name in the bottom right corner). The abstract nature of the painting parallels Forst's approach when writing the *Child's Garden of Verses* pieces, which loosely conveys the poems they represented.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine Forst's works for solo harp and place them within the context of twentieth-century harp literature, to the extent that the information currently available will allow. While a stylistic analysis of his harp works cannot provide a holistic sense of his general musical style, it can at least help us to understand how his solo harp works reflected the stylistic and compositional trends that were prominent at the time of their writing. A second purpose of this study is to bring to light the compositions of mid-twentieth-century composers whose works are not well-known in the year 2020, and to generate interest in their exploration, as well as interest in the composers themselves.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter Two will provide the background information about musical trends in the United States and New York that may have influenced Forst's works. Chapter Two will also include an extensive discussion of the harp and its repertoire during the twentieth century, both in Europe and the United States. The next three chapters will examine Forst's solo works for harp, in chronological order of their publication. Chapter Three will explore Forst's *Homage to Ravel*, a work for solo harp that was adapted for various other instrumentations. I also will examine *Homage to Ravel* for any characteristics that might have been drawn from works by Ravel. Chapter Four will include an examination of Forst's works based on Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*. While the bulk of the chapter will be devoted to a stylistic analysis of these pieces, I also will include discussion of their connections to each other and the poems on which they are based.

Chapter Five will examine *Sequences*, Forst's final work for harp, which was written in 1972 and later published posthumously in 1976. Because of the 28-year gap between *Sequences*

and Forst's previous works for harp, an analysis will help to identify stylistic changes in Forst's works for the harp since the 1940s. Special consideration will be given to understanding if and how Forst's *Sequences* fits into the broader context of post-1960s twentieth-century harp literature. Chapter Six will serve as a summary, including commentary on Forst's works for solo harp from a broad perspective and what they may reveal about his musical style. Chapter Six will also provide suggestions for further research, as the research within this dissertation may only offer an introduction to Forst's works, both in terms of their musical significance and their historical context. Included with this dissertation will be an appendix of lesser-known solo harp works by American-born composers between 1900 and 1980.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature and Methodology

Introduction

Although there are numerous scholarly sources regarding twentieth-century music and harp literature, both general and focused, there is very little discussion of Rudolf Forst, his musical style, or his writing for harp. Clare Reis' *Composers in America*, an annotated compilation of composers' biographies and compositions, is one of the few resources that mentions Forst, but it contains no discussion of his musical style. Because of this lack of literature about Forst, I will discuss literature regarding both general musical developments in Europe and the United States and developments in harp repertoire during the twentieth century. This broad focus will enable me to understand the eclectic array of influences to which Forst was likely exposed during his career and to place his works within the broader context of twentieth-century solo harp literature.

Because Forst died in 1973, I will examine sources that discuss developments in musical trends and harp literature through the 1980s. Furthermore, because Forst is considered a classical American composer, only sources examining American classical music will be considered.[1] Popular genres, such as jazz, ragtime, and blues, will only be mentioned when their influence on classical music is prominent. While some aspects of innovations in harp production will be discussed, I will focus primarily on sources discussing compositional trends in harp literature during the twentieth century.

[1] There is debate on how to properly classify American music outside of popular genres, mostly because many of the most common terms are problematic. "Classical" is the perhaps the least problematic, though I must make a distinction between "classical" as an overarching genre and the Classical Era, which are completely different from each other.

Musical Trends in the United States and New York During the Twentieth Century

There is a plethora of sources available that discuss musical developments during the twentieth century, both in the United States and in Europe. Joseph Auner's *Music in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* and various articles in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music* both proved to be excellent sources for providing general contextual information on musical developments during the twentieth century. Other sources specifically focusing on the United States are Kyle Gann's *American Music in the Twentieth Century,* Otto Karolyi's *Modern American Music,* and *The Cambridge History of American Music.* Carol Oja's *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* provides an extensive examination of New York City through 1930. Within the most comprehensive of these sources there is a high degree of overlap between topics. Many sources on general musical developments during the twentieth century not only discuss trends in Europe, but in the United States and New York City as well. Because the purpose of this review of literature is to provide a general summary of twentieth-century music, I found it more useful to consult more broadly focused resources.

Most sources agree that the twentieth century was a time of widespread change in both Europe and the United States. Many of the developments in Europe had an impact on the United States (and vice versa, in some cases). In general, rapid developments in science and technology had widespread impact on society and how information was transmitted. Recording and broadcasting technologies affected the preservation and distribution of music.[2] Global conflicts, such as World War I and World War II, drastically influenced musical developments, often leading to music of a more experimental nature.[3] Compositional trends often shifted between

[2] Joseph Auner, *Music in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013), 90-91.
[3] Auner, *Music in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries,* 80-81; David Osmond-Smith, "New Beginnings: The International Avant-Garde," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004), 336.

embracing or rejecting past musical traditions, often referred to as "-isms." Among the most prominent trends were Impressionism (which predates 1900), Modernism, Primitivism, Serialism, Neoclassicism, and Minimalism.[4]

In turning our attention to musical developments in the United States, all sources agree that America's musical culture is highly diverse—so much so that some historians have had difficulty in discerning which musical trends are uniquely "American," which were borrowed from Europe, and what constitutes an "American" sound. Kyle Gann has suggested that the popular genres are the closest thing to a truly American musical tradition.[5] Certainly, these popular musical traditions had far-reaching influence as many composers, both in Europe and beyond, incorporated aspects of these styles into their own idioms.[6]

The American classical-music scene was a different matter. Until the mid-twentieth century, the vast majority of American composers largely borrowed aspects of European traditions. Furthermore, different events in history dictated trends in American classical music. Political turmoil in Europe in the aftermath of World War I and leading up to and during World War II led to the immigration of several prominent European composers, including Arnold Schoenberg, Paul Hindemith, and Igor Stravinsky, many of whom found teaching positions at American universities.[7]

While early American composers adhered largely to German musical traditions, World War I and World War II spawned a rise in anti-German sentiments, allowing other foreign influences to take precedence.[8] The French composers became an especially prominent influence

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[4] Auner, *Music in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, 2-4.
[5] Kyle Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Schirmer, 1997), xiv.
[6] Susan C. Cook, "Flirting with the Vernacular: America in Europe, 1900-45," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, 152-155.
[7] Gann, *American Music*, 102-104.
[8] Stephen Peles, "Serialism and Complexity," in *The Cambridge History of American Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998), 500-502.

on American composers during the early twentieth century, in part through the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau and Nadia Boulanger.[9] The period between World War I and II also led to exploration of early avant-garde styles, though the onset of the Great Depression led to a period of populism in American music, during which composers sought to write works that were more accessible to the general population.[10]

One of the major centers of musical developments in the United States was New York City. While not the only major city with a rich musical culture, New York City was certainly one of the largest, and a majority of the American composers who had far-reaching influence were residents there, including Aaron Copland (1900-1990), Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990), and John Cage (1912-1992). Throughout the 1910s and '20s, New York City was an influential force in American avant-garde and modernism.

The foremost influences on modernism in New York City during the early twentieth century came from Europe, both through musical trends and the composers who immigrated there. Works by Igor Stravinsky, Bela Bartók, Alexander Scriabin, and Eric Satie were popular in New York during first quarter of the twentieth century, particular those of Stravinsky.[11] Leo Ornstein and Edgar Varèse were immigrants who made New York City their home and were active members of the musical community, composing music that was forward-thinking.[12]

By the 1920s and '30s, American-born composers were emerging as the forerunners of modern music in New York City, including Copland, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Virgil Thompson, and Henry Cowell, most of whom were influenced by connections with European composers in

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[9] Caroline Potter, "Boulanger, (Juliette) Nadia," *Oxford Music Online*, accessed October 30, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.03705.
[10] Gann, *American Music*, 49.
[11] Carol J. Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University, 2000), 50-54.
[12] Oja, *Making Music Modern,* 11, 25-26.

some way or another. By the latter half of the twentieth century, John Cage and the avant-garde nature of chance music became a major musical force, both in New York City and abroad.[13]

New York City was also home to several prominent universities, many of which had music programs established in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Among the oldest was the New York College of Music, which was established in 1878, and was later incorporated into New York University in 1968.[14] David Osmond-Smith notes that, toward the 1940s, many of the universities within New York City sought to "protect the more intellectually rigorous forms of musical experiment."[15] Led by prominent composers like Milton Babbitt and Elliott Carter, this academic focus further established New York City as a center of avant-garde and experimental genres during the mid-twentieth century.[16]

Harp Literature in the Twentieth Century

General writings about harp literature during the twentieth century are plentiful. The most comprehensive sources are Roslyn Rensch's *Harps and Harpists* and *The Harp: Its History, Technique, and Repertoire*, both of which balance between discussions of developments in the harp's structure, the general state of harp literature, and notable composers and performers. Evelyn Iversen's dissertation provides a brief survey of harp literature through the 1970s. Miscellaneous articles from various books and journals also cover information that comprehensive sources may not discuss in detail (or at all).

Most sources agree that, although the harp has been in existence since ancient Egypt, its

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[13] Gann, *American Music*, 127-128.
[14] Irving Kolodin, Francis D. Perkins, Susan Thiemann Sommer, Zdravko Blažeković, John Shepard, Sara Velez, Paul Griffiths, John Rockwell, Edward A. Berlin, J. Bradford Robinson, and Nina Davis-Millis, "New York," *Grove Music Online*, accessed 31 Oct. 2020, https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000019843; The New York College of Music is pertinent to this discussion, because Forst taught there as a violin instructor for three years.
[15] Osmond-Smith, "New Beginnings," 345.
[16] Ibid., 345-346.

status as a virtuoso instrument was not attained until the late-Classical Era, when the single-action pedal harp was developed in 1720, which featured a light and clear tone, with little resonance.[17] The development of the double-action pedal harp in 1811—now known simply as the pedal harp—introduced an expanded range of timbral capabilities and composers were quick to explore the new sonorities.[18] Composers began expanding upon the body of harp literature at an exponential rate, and the instrument enjoyed an influx of works in all areas. Among the first composers to truly begin exploring the timbral capabilities of the double-action pedal harp was Elias Parish Alvars, particularly its enharmonic capabilities, which allowed for single-note trills and glissandos in which unnecessary pitches could be eliminated.[19]

Although the complexity of writing for the harp varied, nearly all who wrote for it made use of the double-action pedal harp's new harmonic and sonoric capabilities, and the entire body of literature benefitted greatly as a result.[20] Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel not only included prominent harp parts in their orchestral works, but also contributed *Danses sacrée et profane* and *Introduction et allegro*, respectively, showcasing virtuosic, idiomatic writing for the harp.[21] Alongside the earlier increase in virtuosic solo harp works during the late-Romantic Era, Ravel and Debussy's writing for harp was so effective that the harp became synonymous with Romanticism and French Impressionism, a connection that it had difficulty breaking later in the century.[22]

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[17] Hans Joachim Zingel, "Harp Music at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century," in *Harp Music in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. and trans. Mark Palkovic (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1992), 1-2.
[18] Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 181-182.
[19] Ibid., 196.
[20] Ibid., 190-215.
[21] It should be noted that Debussy's *Danses sacrée et profane* was originally written for the *harpe chromatique*, an instrument that sought to eliminate pedals by employing two cross-strung ranks of strings and was later adapted for the double-action pedal harp by Henriette Renié.
[22] Kirsty Whatley, "Rough Romance: Sequenza II for Harp as a Study and Statement," in *Berio's Sequenzas,* ed. Janet K. Halfyard (Hampshire, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007), 41.

By the mid-twentieth century an increasing number of composers began writing solo works for the harp that incorporated more experimental writing for the instrument, many of which are now standards within the modern repertoire. Paul Hindemith's *Sonate für harfe* (1939) and Alberto Ginastera's *Harp Concerto*, Op. 25 (1956) both contain more modernized writing for the harp, featuring unconventional harmonies, stronger dissonances and atonality, and, in the case of Ginastera's concerto, incorporation of Argentinian rhythms and percussive extended techniques.

By the 1960s and '70s, composers of solo harp works were exploring more avant-garde approaches to writing, incorporating aspects of twelve-tone, chance, and atonality.[23] Composers were more interested in exploring the harp's timbral capabilities, rather than writing Romantic or Impressionistic works with lyrical melodies. Luciano Berio's *Sequenza II* (1963) is one of the most famous examples, with its atonal harmonic structure, heavy use of timbral effects, and exploration of extreme dynamic ranges. The establishment of the International Harp Contest in Israel in 1959 also led to new works continually being added to the repertoire, as composers would be commissioned to write works for each occurrence of the competition.[24]

The Harp in the United States

Both of Roslyn Rensch's books include discussions of the harp in the United States. However, sources that focus on just the harp in the United States are less common. According to Lucile Jenning's article "The Harp in America," the first harps were brought to the United States early in its colonial history, though the exact date is unknown.[25] According to Rensch, pedal

[23] Evelyn Iversen, "A Brief Historical Survey of the Harp and its Literature with an Analysis of Selected Harp Compositions From the Mid-Twentieth Century to the Present," (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1981), 30.
[24] Lucy Clark Scandrett, "Letter From the AHS President: The Israel Connection," *The American Harp Journal* 22, no. 2 (Winter 2009): 12-13.
[25] Lucile Jennings, "The Harp in America," *The American Harp Journal* 5, no. 3 (Summer 1976): 3-8.

harps first appeared in the United States as early as the late 1700s.[26] At first, they were brought over by immigrants, but as their popularity rose, they were later imported from Europe. However, the shipping process was long, expensive, and often resulted in damaged instruments. This led to the establishment of Browne and Company in 1830, Lyon and Healy in 1889, and Wurlitzer in 1909, companies that produced harps in the United States with tremendous success.[27]

In a similar vein, the works for harp performed in the United States during the early 1800s were typically solos and etudes composed by European composers. Most were airs or transcriptions of other popular works or pieces written by harpists.[28] However, unlike harp production, even by the mid-1920s, the composers of prominent harp works in the United States seemed to be primarily European-born harpists who immigrated to the United States and established lasting careers, including Marcel Grandjany and Carlos Salzedo, who also established harp departments at Juilliard and Curtis, respectively.[29]

However, although composers of European birth were adding to the body of twentieth-century harp literature in increasing quantity, solo works by American-born composers were less notable between 1900 and 1940. William Truesdale Cameron, the harpist for the United States Navy Band, composed nearly fifty works for solo harp, several of which date from the late 1930s. However, it is not clear in what style his works were written, as his works are not readily available, either as scores or as recordings.[30] Harry J. Chalmers also composed several works for

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[26] Harps imported before 1811 would have been single-action pedals harps, the predecessor to the double-action pedal harp.
[27] Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 220-223, 226, and 231.
[28] Ibid., 230.
[29] Ibid., 240-243.
[30] "William T. Cameron Dies, Harp Soloist for Navy Band," *The Washington Post*, accessed April 7, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1977/01/31/william-t-cameron-dies-harp-soloist-for-navy-band/8b58a2b9-692a-4d60-87fc-8a3672f7f7e5/; Mark Palkovic, "Original Works for Solo Harp," in *Harp Music Bibliography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 37-38.

harp during the 1920s and ’30s, many of which are still performed today, but they reflect a more Romantic-era style of writing.[31] Alan Hovhaness’s *Nocturne*, which was published in 1938, may be one of the earliest examples of a solo harp work by an American composer that is outside of Romantic traditions.[32]

However, between 1940 and 1980, an increasing number of solo works for harp by American composers was beginning to emerge, though this increase really did not begin until the 1950s, with only a few works being written in the 1940s. These composers included Halsey Stevens, Nicolas Flagello, Walter Mourant, and Gardner Read, although a significant number of these works remain less known as of 2020. Many were published by now-defunct companies,[33] making acquisition of them more difficult. Toward the end of the twentieth century, the same avant-garde style that was prevalent among European composers was found in the works of American composers as well.

No discussion of twentieth-century harp literature is complete without mentioning Carlos Salzedo and his contributions to harp literature. Salzedo was an especially influential composer of harp music during the early-to-mid-twentieth century. Throughout his career, he pushed the harp beyond the confines of what was deemed traditional or even acceptable at the time, as is concisely outlined in his treatise *The Modern Study of the Harp* (1918). Salzedo also codified the few existing extended techniques for the harp and developed new techniques, which he used in his music. Perhaps the most notable effects were the use of pedal movements to produce effects

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[31] Mark Palkovic, “Original Works for Solo Harp,” in *Harp Music Bibliography Supplement* (Lanham: Scarecrow, 2002), 45-46; I was able to access recordings of Chalmer’s works through YouTube.
[32] Arnold Rosner and Vance Wolverton, “Hovhaness [Hovaness], Alan,” *Grove Music Online,* accessed April 4, 2020, https://doi-org.proxy.bsu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.13420.
[33] A review of appropriate sources on the web seems to indicate that at least two major companies that published harp music during the mid-twentieth century, Seesaw Music and Edition Musicus, no longer seem to be publishing current works or were incorporated into larger companies. The American Composers Alliance is still distributing Walter Mourant’s works.

and new types of glissandos, many of which led to criticism. Despite the mixed reception of Salzedo's innovations, many composers were quick to employ his techniques.[34] His extended techniques made their way into works of several prominent composers throughout the twentieth century. André Caplet's (1878-1925) *Deux Divertissements: à l'espagnole* (1925) makes substantial use of pedal slides.[35] R. Murray Schafer (b. 1933) implements several of Salzedo's extended techniques in *Crown of Ariadne* (1979), including fluidic sounds, xylophonic sounds, vibrato, and pedal slides.[36] Although George Crumb's use of harp was in his chamber works, he also employed some of Salzedo's innovations, specifically the use of harmonics at the fifth in *Quest* (1996).[37]

Summary of the Review of Literature

Rudolf Forst lived during an incredibly turbulent period in music history. Throughout his lifetime, he witnessed two global wars and the rapid advancement of technology, all of which had a tremendous impact on musical developments. Musical trends during the twentieth century often oscillated between three approaches: holding onto past musical styles, completely breaking from past musical styles, or integrating old and new. This oscillation between trends was not only seen throughout the twentieth century, but even within a composer's career. New styles in both popular and classical music were also emerging, and many composers sought to integrate

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[34] Dewey Owens, *From Aeolian to Thunder* (Chicago: Lyon and Healy, 2001), 95-96.
[35] Andre Caplet, *À l'espagnole,* (Paris: Durand, 1925); Pedal slides are executed by moving the pedals while the strings are still vibrating, resulting in a distinctive twang sound. They are most effective when executed while the bass wire strings are vibrating.
[36] R. Murray Schafer, *Crown of Ariadne* (Bancroft, Canada: Arcana, 1979); Fluidic sounds are executed by pressing a tuning key into the string and plucking. While the string is vibrating, the tuning key can be slid up and down the string to alter the pitch; Xylophonic sounds are executed by pressing the fingers into the base of the string and plucking, to generate muted sound; Vibrato is executed by pressing the thumb of the left hand into the space between the tuning pin and the nut, which raises the harp. It is more easily achieved in the upper registers and when the harp's pedals are in the flat position.
[37] George Crumb, *Quest* (New York: C. F. Peters, 1996); in the last movement of *Quest*, the harpist is required to play harmonics at the second partial.

the two. This rapid rate of change was seen not only on a global scale, but also within the United States.

At the same time, the harp underwent a slower rate of change, as its major structural developments predate 1900. The harp that was made available to Forst was essentially a perfected version of Erard's double-action pedal harp, which allowed for greater chromaticism and a more expansive range of sonorities, including new special effects. After the start of the twentieth century, the European composers continued to explore the harp's capabilities and began adding to the literature their unique contributions. In the United States, the greatest developments to harp literature came from the influence of Carlos Salzedo, distancing the harp from its more Romantic and Impressionist connections. By the 1960s and '70s, more composers were writing in a more avant-garde style for the harp, pushing it to the extremes of its capabilities.

Methodology

This dissertation's purpose is to increase the availability of information regarding Rudolf Forst and his solo works for the harp. My primary goals are to understand Forst's approach to writing for the harp and to place Forst's works into the broader context of twentieth-century harp literature. Alongside my analyses of these works, I also will include information regarding performance practices for each piece, which is intended to aid harpists who may wish to perform these works, especially since most have not been recorded. An additional outcome of this study is to bring to light the number of twentieth-century harp solos that are lesser-known and hopefully renew interest in exploring the overlooked body of literature.

My approach will largely consist of a stylistic analysis of each of Forst's harp solos. Within each analysis, I will consider the basic musical elements related to form, harmony,

melody, and rhythm. Other analytical points will include notable features of each work that can further inform the reader of Forst's approach and compositional style. I will also include contextual information related to the source materials for each work and any concurrent historical trends that were not discussed in the review of literature. This background information will allow me to more readily place Forst's solo harp works into historical context and to discern whether each work incorporates or eschews the most prominent trends during the time in which each piece was written.

Grace Bauson's dissertation *Contributions of Twentieth-Century Canadian Composers to the Solo Pedal Harp Repertoire* has been a helpful model for how I have structured my research methodology, as has Evelyn Iversen's dissertation, *A Brief Historical Survey of the Harp and its Literature*. Because the purpose of this study is aimed at understanding Forst's stylistic approach, the analytical details will not be as exhaustive as might be the case for a more theoretical dissertation. My analyses will be less detailed than those in either of the above dissertations but will follow a similar structure. This dissertation is designed to begin to place Forst's music into historical context and provide insights for performance practice.

In fulfilling this study's secondary purpose, I am also compiling an appendix of lesser-known works by American composers written between 1900 and 1980. Much of the information will be extracted from existing bibliographies, such as Mark Palkovic's *Harp Music Bibliography* and *Harp Music Bibliography Supplement.* Pearl Chertok's "Let Us Get Acquainted with Our Composers" series, which was featured in the *American Harp Journal* from 1976 to 1979, was also useful for discovering additional works, especially because she focused largely on American composers. While it will not be an exhaustive list, my hope is that it will further bring to light the number of lesser-known solo harp works that exist.

In the next chapter, I will examine Forst's first work for solo harp, *Homage to Ravel*. As I conduct my analysis, I will begin commenting on its stylistic characteristics, which later will be used a point of comparison with the other works. I will also attempt to identify aspects of *Homage to Ravel* that are evocative of the music of Maurice Ravel.

Chapter Three

Homage to the Past: Exploring Allusions to

Ravel's *Sonatine* within Forst's *Homage to Ravel*

Introduction

The first of Forst's solo works for harp that I will be examining is *Homage to Ravel,* which was published by Edition Musicus in 1941. Although Forst had completed *Looking Glass River* for solo harp that same year, correspondence between Forst and Carlos Salzedo indicates that *Homage to Ravel* was the first to be published. At first glance, it is apparent that *Homage to Ravel* demonstrates Forst's keen understanding of writing for the harp—it is scored idiomatically for the harp, is well-marked and fingered, and accurately uses special symbols. The concise markings and specialized symbols were a direct influence of Salzedo, who implemented highly detailed markings in his own compositions. The systematic pedaling scheme in *Homage to Ravel,* which places the markings for pedals on the right side of the harp above those on the left in the score, was also developed by Salzedo.[1] Salzedo was quick to praise Forst for his work, which is shown in an excerpt from a letter that was printed on the cover of *From a Railway Carriage*:

> …your 'Homage to Ravel' for harp is a lovely work, and exactly the kind we need in our repertoire. But it is more than a concert selection; the judicious way in which it has been fingered and pedaled and the proper usage of the symbols characteristics to the harp of to-day [*sic*], is indeed a lesson for all the composers who want to compose effectively and usefully for the harp. I do hope that 'Homage to Ravel' will not remain lonely and that you will soon enrich the harp literature with other works as fascinating as this one.[2]

[1] Not all composers of harp works used Salzedo's pedaling system. Other harp works are shown to use a different pedaling scheme or omit pedals altogether.
[2] Rudolf Forst, *From a Railway Carriage* (Hudson: Edition Musicus, 1944).

It is interesting that Forst's first published work for solo harp was a tribute work. Tribute pieces were not a new phenomenon in music during Forst's career. One subgenre of tribute works was the *tombeau,* which originated in France during the seventeenth century. A tombeau is often dedicated to a historical (usually deceased) figure, though occasionally they are dedicated to fictional characters. The tombeau experienced a revival during the twentieth century through composers such as Maurice Ravel, Manuel de Falla, and Georges Migot. One of the more notable examples is Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin,* which he composed between 1914 and 1917. The trend continued well into the 1920s and '30s, with some tombeau collections being comprised of works by multiple composers.[3] Homages are another subgenre of tribute work that dates back to at least the 1790s.[4] Claude Debussy wrote several homages for solo piano, including *Hommage à Haydn* (1910).[5] In the case of tribute works that are dedicated to composers, many do incorporate some stylistic element of their dedicatees. However, this is not a requirement, and many tribute works might only evoke their honoree through the title and nothing more.

The revival of instrumental tribute works during the twentieth century indicates that Forst's *Homage to Ravel* was not out of place during the 1940s. However, this does not necessarily explain why Forst, an American composer, would choose to write one, especially for the harp. Perhaps the popularity and influence of French composers on their American counterparts might have some connection. Maurice Ravel died in 1937, just four years before Forst composed *Homage to Ravel*, and we can assume that Forst may have known about Ravel

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[3] Michael Tilmouth and David Ledbetter, "Tombeau," *Oxford Music Online,* accessed September 24, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.28084.

[4] There are no general discussions about *homages* as a type of tribute work, but the National Library of France's online archive lists several pieces dating back to the 1790s that have "hommage (Fr)*"* in the title.

[5] Francois Lesure and Roy Howat, "Claude (Achilles) Debussy," *Oxford Music Online,* accessed September 24, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.07353.

and his works. Forst also composed *Homage to Debussy* (1985; posthumous publication date)[6] in tribute to Claude Debussy.

Additional French influence was felt in New York through Nadia Boulanger. During her time at the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau in France, she was one of the most prominent influences on American composers. Many of her pupils, in turn, became influential figures in American classical music, including Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, Leonard Bernstein, and Elliott Carter.[7] Although Forst never studied with her,[8] many of her students were well-known figures in New York City during the 1920s through '40s, the time when Forst would have been beginning his career as a composer. New York City was also a major center of new music throughout the twentieth century. The establishment of the French-led International Composers' Guild and the organizations that followed would have given Forst access to new works from across Europe and the United States.[9]

Analysis of *Homage to Ravel*

Homage to Ravel is a short work in ternary form. It also features passages that seem somewhat developmental in nature, as observed in the B section that begins with a statement of the opening A section phrase. The first A section spans from mm. 1 to 22. The B section covers from mm. 23 to 44, and the reprise of A spans from mm. 45 to 72. Transitions between the main sections tend to be direct, with no pauses in between. Interestingly, without the 6 bars of

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[6] *Homage to Debussy* was published posthumously through Accentuate Music. The actual date of composition is currently unknown.
[7] Caroline Potter, "Nadia Boulanger," *Oxford Music Online*, accessed September 28, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.03705.
[8] Forst was a student of Daniel Gregory Mason, who favored the German musical traditions and was not sympathetic toward Impressionism or modernism, though Mason was noted for occasionally incorporating Impressionist elements into his later works.
[9] Kyle Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Schirmer, 1997), 27-28.

extended cadence at the end, each section would be exactly 22 measures in length.

The phrases break down into two- or four-bar segments. These shorter fragments are then connected to create longer phrases. Motivic and rhythmic patterns are often repeated, either directly or transposed. For instance, mm. 5 and 6 are identical repetitions of the same material, while in mm. 7 through 10, the same two-bar phrase is repeated, but partially transposed (see fig. 3.1). If a motive is not repeated melodically, then it is usually repeated rhythmically. For instance, in mm. 27 through 30, the notes and intervals are different, but the rhythms are the same (see fig. 3.2). Nearly all of the melodic and rhythmic motives are treated in this way.

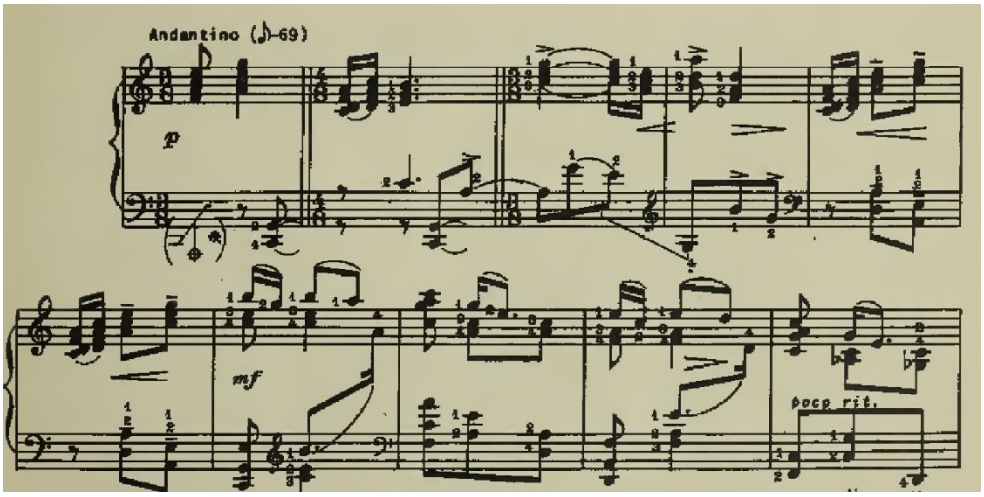

Fig. 3.1: Rudolf Forst, *Homage to Ravel*, mm. 1-10. Note the use of repetition, both directly (mm. 5-6) and in sequence (mm. 7-10).

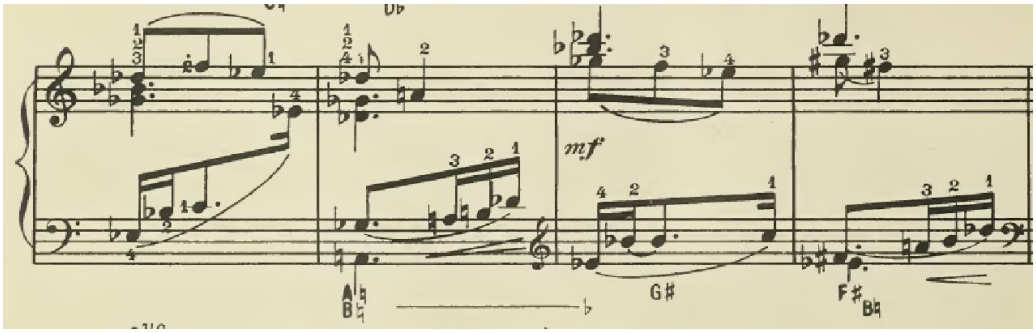

Fig. 3.2: Rudolf Forst, *Homage to Ravel*, mm. 27-30. Although the intervals are different, the same rhythmic motive is being repeated.

The melody in *Homage to Ravel* moves primarily in steps, thirds, and occasionally, fourths. Often, it is characterized in one of two ways, either a leap up a third followed by a step up or down (or vice versa) or ascending by thirds to form a seventh chord. The melody tends to be rhythmical in nature rather than lyrical, and for much of the piece, it seems to blend in with the harmonies rather than stand out on its own.

Homage to Ravel is rather dense in texture, with only a few thinner passages throughout the piece. Much of this density can be attributed to the use of large chords, which often span several registers. Even in places where the tessitura is primarily in the upper registers of the harp, the writing is still dense. Forst uses nearly the entire register of the harp, and quite often there are large leaps between the treble and bass register.

For the majority of the piece, the rhythms move in eighth- or sixteenth-note patterns. Many of the rhythmic motives can be characterized by either "short-short-long" or "long-short-short" figures, which are varied throughout the piece. The only rhythmic variant Forst employs in the piece is in mm. 33 through 36, where Forst added sixteenth-note triplets on beat three of each measure. The added triplets could be seen as part of the climax of the piece (see fig. 3.3). The piece is almost entirely in 3/8 time, but there are three instances where the meter switches to 4/8 for one measure. The first is in m. 2, the second is in m. 24, and the third is in m. 46. These 4/8 bars are not placed randomly, but they occur at the second measure of each major section (see fig. 3.4). Perhaps Forst intends this metric change to be a musical signal for when a new section has begun, because the amount of repetition can make it hard to distinguish when one section ends and when another begins. However, the meter change is not necessarily perceptible to the listener's ear, and it is possibly not as effective a signal as it could be if it were the first or last measure of a section.

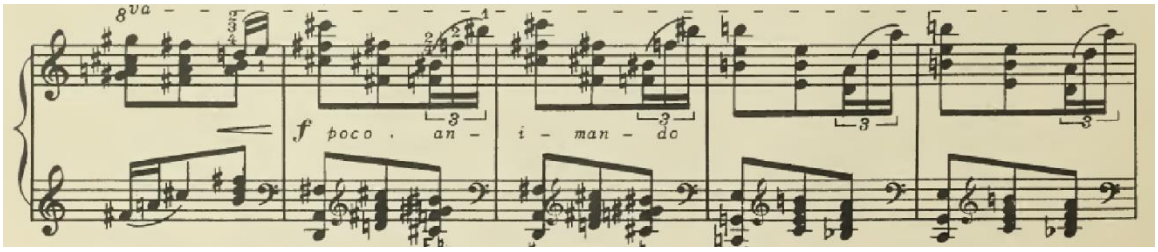

Fig. 3.3: Rudolf Forst, *Homage to Ravel*, mm. 32-35. Note the sixteenth-note triplets at the end of the last four measures.

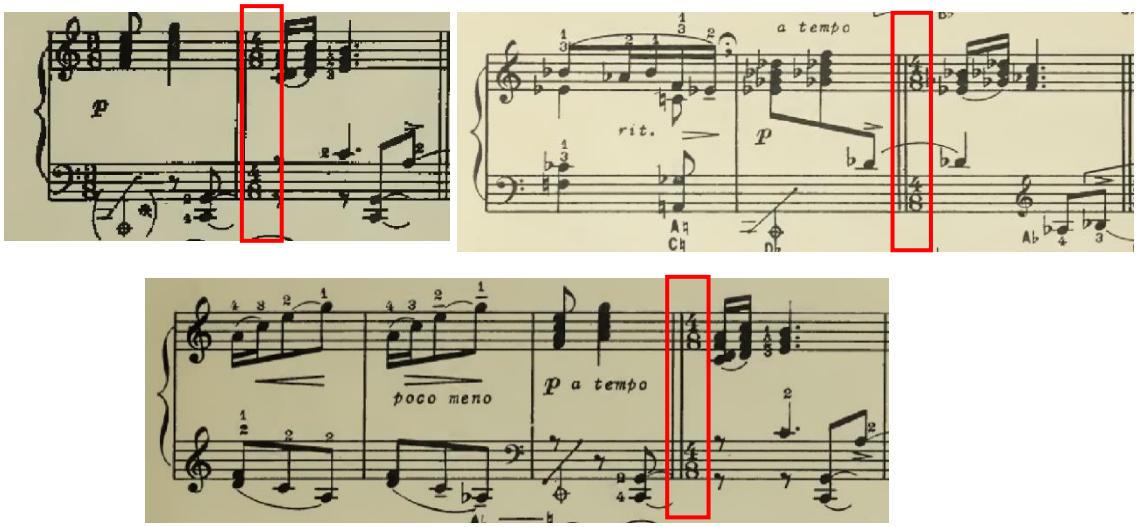

Fig. 3.4: Rudolf Forst, *Homage to Ravel*, mm. 1-2 (top left), mm. 21-13 (top right), and mm. 42-25 (bottom).

The harmonies throughout *Homage to Ravel* are primarily built on seventh chords. Most of these seventh chords are major or minor sevenths that are diatonic within their respective tonal centers. While they have no real harmonic function, they do add harmonic color without adding excessive dissonances. These seventh chords do not resolve to a consonance, but instead move up or down to another seventh chord. In a few places, the seventh chords move by thirds, which allows them to be heard as ninths or thirteenths as well. There are only a few instances where consonant harmonies occur, and if one hand plays a consonant chord, it is usually paired with a seventh in the other hand. Perhaps the most definitive consonant chord is found at the very end of the piece, a C-major chord.

The opening tonal center is C major, but *Homage to Ravel* lacks the traditional chord progressions that would normally establish key areas. In the opening, the only musical trait that grounds the passage in C is the low open fifth, as the preceding two chords of FM7 and Am7 (or FM9), while diatonic to C, leave a sense of tonal ambiguity. Similarly, cadential passages are weakened, with Forst avoiding the use of V-I progressions. The cadence at m. 12 uses a ii-I motion, which helps to emphasize C as the tonal center, though not as strongly as a V-I motion.

Within the remainder of the A section, the harmonies move away from C, touching briefly on G, A, and Ab. By the start of the B section, the tonal center has shifted to Db, the Neapolitan chord of C. Throughout the B section, the piece passes through F# minor (Gb minor, enharmonically), and finally D major. At m. 33, Forst uses a harmonic sequence that gradually descends stepwise as a way to transition back to C. Between mm. 33 and 34, the harmonic progression within the measure is DM7 and C#M7, which is then shifted one major second downward to CM7 and BbM7 (see fig. 3.3). The harmonies stabilize in m. 38, which brings the piece back to the return of C as the tonal center when the A section is repeated. The harmonies in the reprise of A are varied, briefly touching on C minor, Eb major, and Ab major. The final cadence of the piece uses a bVII-I progression. Here, the sense of finality comes primarily through an extended cadential passage from mm. 67 through 72, instead of through a V-I progression.

Homage to Ravel as a Tribute Work

As stated earlier, not all tribute pieces that are dedicated to deceased composers necessarily evoke the sounds and styles of that composer. However, there are several features of Forst's *Homage to Ravel* that are reminiscent of Ravel's music. While there is no clear evidence that Forst was inspired by any one particular work of Ravel's, there are passages that are

reminiscent of the second movement of Ravel's *Sonatine*. Both pieces are in ternary form and feature a repeat at the end of m. 12. Both pieces exhibit smaller two- and four-bar melodic and rhythmic fragments that are repeated frequently throughout the piece. Both pieces also use a similar harmonic language, featuring non-functional seventh harmonies and non-traditional progressions. These are just the basic musical similarities between *Homage to Ravel* and the second movement of *Sonatine*. Additionally, there are more specific passages within *Homage to Ravel* that seem directly paraphrased from *Sonatine*.

One of the most notable examples is found in the opening motives of both pieces. In the second movement of *Sonatine*, the opening motive is a four-bar phrase that begins and ends with a "short-long" rhythmic figure. In *Homage to Ravel* the first four-bar phrase begins and ends with an identical rhythmic figure (see fig 3.5). While the melodic lines in between mm. 1 and 4 are not entirely the same, they share rhythmic and harmonic similarities. Perhaps the most striking feature is found in the passages leading back into the reprise of A in both pieces. In mm. 45 through 49 of *Sonatine*, movement two, the transition back to A is marked by a "short-long" figure, followed by an upward "short-short-long-short-short" figure. From mm. 49 through 55, the rhythmic figure is repeated four times over a descending bass figure, with changing harmonies in the treble part. In *Homage to Ravel*, mm. 38 through 42, there is an identical rhythmic figure, followed by an ascending "short-short-long" figure. From mm. 42 to 44, the "short-short-long" figure is repeated twice over a similar descending bass figure, with changing harmony in the bass part (see fig. 3.6).

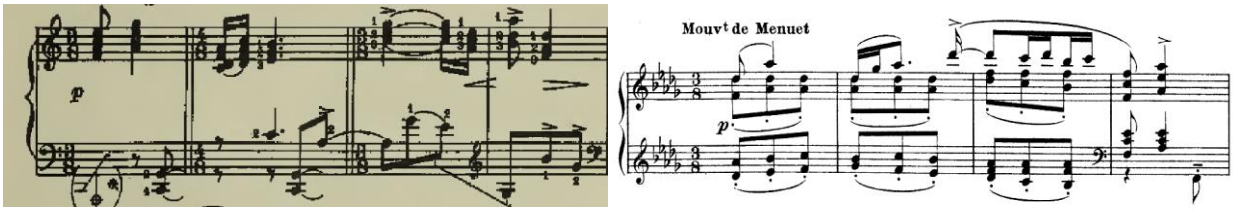

Fig. 3.5: Rudolf Forst, *Homage to Ravel*, mm. 1-4 (left) and Maurice Ravel, Sonatine, second movement, mm. 1-4 (right). Note the similarity of the rhythm and the melodic contour in both of the excerpts.

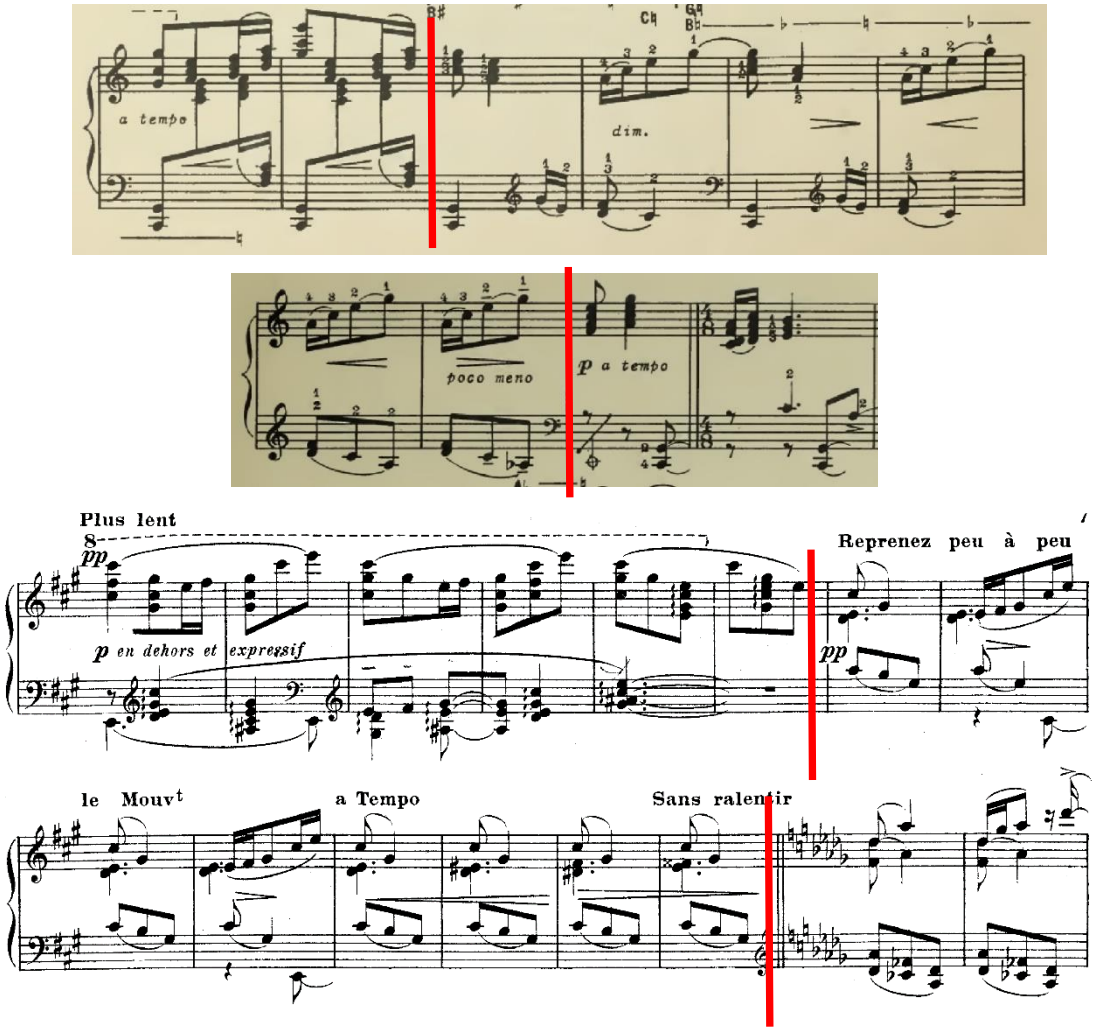

Fig. 3.6: Rudolf Forst, *Homage to Ravel*, mm. 37-47 (top) and Maurice Ravel, Sonatine, second movement, mm. 38-54 (bottom). The basic musical idea is the same between the two excerpts, though the passage in *Homage to Ravel* is varied and two bars shorter.

There are some significant differences between the two as well, which keeps *Homage to Ravel* from sounding like a mere copy of *Sonatine*. While both pieces feature repetitions of short melodic and rhythmic fragments, *Homage to Ravel* features them more prominently. The ending sections between the two works are also quite different. The ending of the second movement of *Sonatine* uses material from the final phrase of its first A section (see fig. 3.7). In *Homage to Ravel,* the end of the piece uses material from the climax of its B section and opening passage (see fig. 3.8). In *Homage to Ravel,* there is also no pause between the end of the reprise of A and the cadential passage as well.[10]

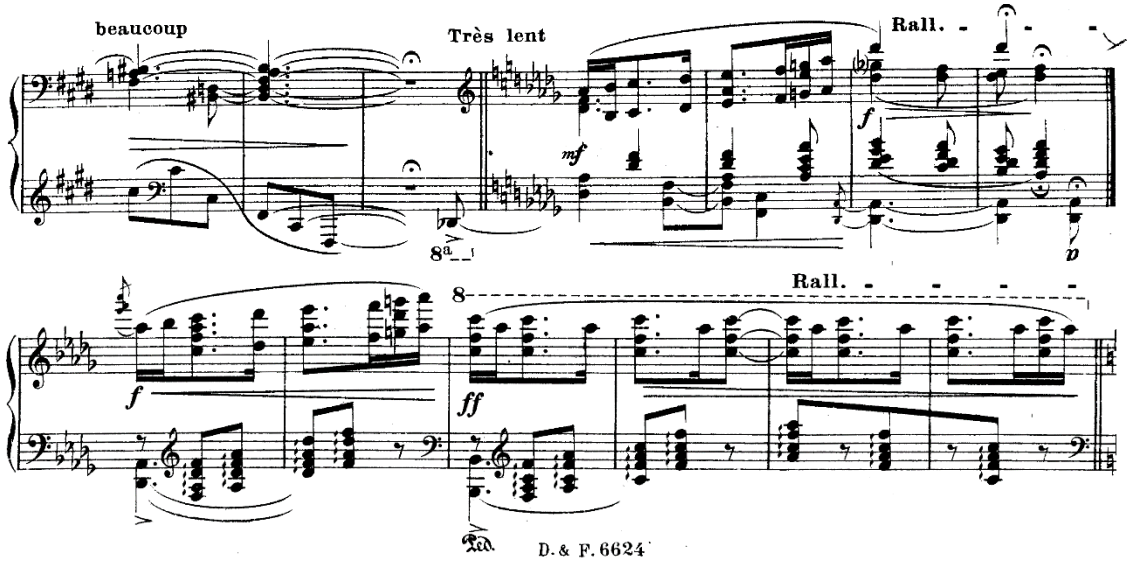

Fig. 3.7: Maurice Ravel, *Sonatine*, second movement, mm. 76-82 (top). Mm. 32-37 (bottom) are shown for reference.

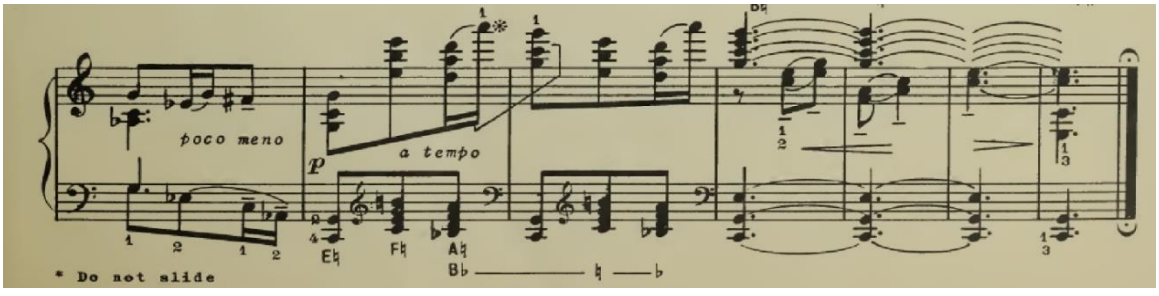

Fig. 3.8: Rudolf Forst, *Homage to Ravel,* mm 66-72. The ending passage recalls materials from both B and A.

[10] The ending of *Homage to Ravel* is rhythmically more reminiscent of the ending of "The Fairy Garden" from Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*, minus the glissandos, though this could be purely coincidental.

In light of these specific details, it is reasonable to suggest that Forst's *Homage to Ravel* not only implements characteristics of Ravel's musical style, but also incorporates limited specific melodic and rhythmic ideas from the second movement of *Sonatine*. While there are possible references to Ravel's music within *Homage to Ravel*, there is enough of Forst's own musical voice to allow the piece to stand on its own. Forst's musical tribute is less complex than Ravel's *Sonatine*, implementing more direct repetition and a more clear-cut phrasing scheme, but these features do not detract from its effectiveness. It is not clear if Forst was consciously using *Sonatine* as the inspiration for *Homage to Ravel*, but a reasonable speculation is that Forst may have encountered *Sonatine* during his piano studies.

Various Arrangements of *Homage to Ravel*

Perhaps one of the more interesting aspects about *Homage to Ravel* is the fact that it exists in several different settings. The solo harp version was the first iteration, but soon after, Forst adapted it to other instruments. An adaptation of *Homage to Ravel* is set for flute and piano, published through Edition Musicus in 1944. The inside cover indicates that there were at least six trio settings for the piece as well, which implies that the piece may have been quite popular after its debut. In one score of *Homage to Ravel* that is located in the American Harp Society Archives at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, there is a handwritten note indicating that there also may be a version for flute, cello, and harp (see fig. 3.9).[11] However, this arrangement has not been located. It is possible that someone other than Forst may have simply reworked an existing arrangement for performance on different instruments.

[11] The curator of the AHS Archives was able to provide a scan for me.

When comparing the solo harp version and the flute and piano version, one finds that they are identical in terms of melodic and rhythmic content. The only difference is that the melody is allocated to the flute, while the accompaniment is much denser harmonically. For instance, the climax from mm. 33 through 37 features sextuplets rather than triplets and a greater occurrence of repeated notes (see fig. 3.10). An adaptation for solo piano was published posthumously through Accentuate Music in 1985.

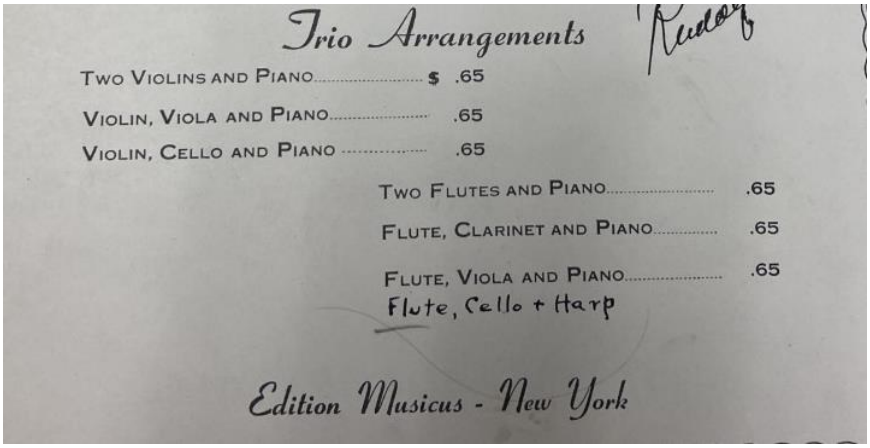

Fig. 3.9: The inside cover of *Homage to Ravel* that shows the various trio arrangements of the same work. Note the handwritten note indicating a version for flute, cello, and harp.

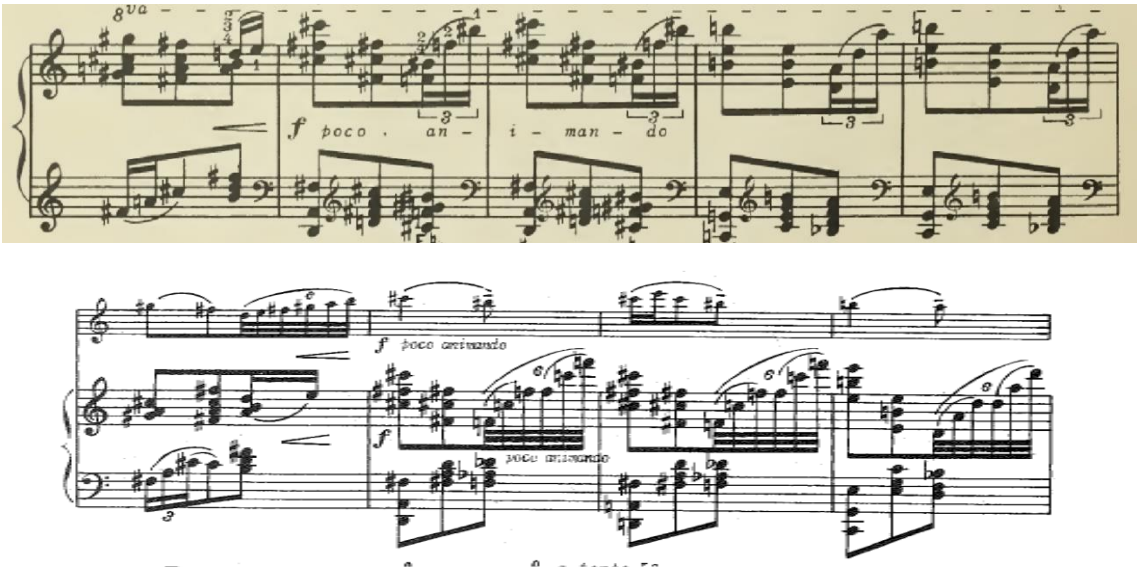

Fig. 3.10: Rudolf Forst: *Homage to Ravel* (top), mm. 32-36 and *Homage to Ravel* for flute and piano, mm. 32-35 (bottom).

Conclusion

Within this chapter, I have analyzed Forst's *Homage to Ravel* and investigated how it pays tribute to Ravel. Through my analysis, I discovered strong connections between *Homage to Ravel* and the second movement of Ravel's *Sonatine*. *Homage to Ravel* features a general harmonic and rhythmical scheme that is strikingly similar to *Sonatine*. It also contains motives that seem directly modeled on those found in *Sonatine,* though *Homage to Ravel* is varied enough that it is not to be considered a direct copy. This understanding of *Homage to Ravel* and its basic musical elements can be useful for harpists who wish to study the work. An understanding of the phrase structure is possibly the most helpful, since many of the phrases are repeated between sections.

In the next chapter, I will examine four of Forst's works that are based on Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses.* Because they were written during the same period as *Homage to Ravel,* the overall musical style is expected to be similar. However, because they are based on poems, I also will consider any possible programmatic and Impressionistic elements as well.

Chapter Four

A Child's Garden of Music: Forst's Works for Solo Harp Based on Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*

Introduction

Following the publication of *Homage to Ravel,* Forst continued to compose solo works for harp. Between 1941 and 1944, he composed at least four works based on Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses,* a collection of short poems that describe observations of the world from a child's perspective. The collection was first published in 1885, and its popularity led to several revisions throughout the years, many of which contained updated illustrations and cover art (see fig. 4.1). Stevenson based many of the poems on his own experiences as a child, when chronic illness caused him to spend much of his time bedridden.[1] Why Forst chose to compose works based on these poems is unclear, but considering how popular the collection was, it is possible that Forst may have encountered these poems during his own childhood.

Furthermore, Forst was not the only composer to write works based on these poems. *A Child's Garden of Verses* has been set to music by numerous composers, both before and after Forst wrote his own renditions. Natalie Curtis Burlin composed *Songs from A Child's Garden of Verses* in 1902.[2] Walter Mourant published several pieces based on poems from the collection throughout his career.[3] More recent is Chee-Hwa Tan's set of solo piano works which were

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[1] "Robert Louis Stevenson," *Poetry Foundation,* accessed October 19, 2020, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/robert-louis-stevenson.
[2] Natalie Curtis Burlin, "Song's From a Child's Garden of Verses," *Library of Congress,* accessed May 15, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/45052731/.
[3] "Walter Mourant," *American Composers Alliance,* accessed July 20, 2020, https://composers.com/composers/walter-mourant; it is unclear as to what the original publication date is for Mourant's works, but according to the American Composers Alliance, they were published as recently as 1991.

based on eight of the poems from the collection.[4] Even when conducting a general search on the internet, several links leading to related works appear, which serves as a testament to *A Child's Garden of Verses'* continued popularity as source material for composers.[5]

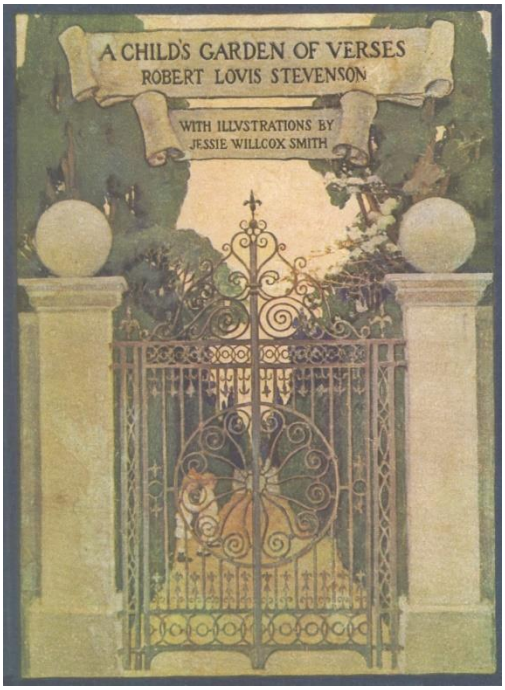

Fig. 4.1: The cover of a 1905 edition of *A Child's Garden of Verses* by Robert Louis Stevenson. Image obtained from Project Gutenberg.

At a glance, it seems that the vast majority of works based on Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* are arranged for voice or chorus and accompaniment, or solo piano. However, Forst made the decision to adapt these pieces for solo harp, which was an unusual choice given the scarcity of solo harp literature by American composers leading up to the 1940s. As of the year 2020, four pieces by Forst based on Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* have been identified: *Windy Nights, From a Railway Carriage, Looking Glass River,* and *Land of Nod.*[6] The

[4] Chee-Hwa Tan, "Music," *Chee-Hwa Tan,* accessed September 24, 2020, http://chee-hwa.com/music/.
[5] There are several links that lead to online stores where scores can be purchased, including prominent distributors such as J.W. Pepper and Alfred.
[6] Although these titles are part of Stevenson's collection, Forst's renditions were all published individually. As a result, I have decided that I will treat their titles as such, using italics instead of placing them between quotation marks.

first was written in 1941 and the last was written in 1944. Furthermore, Forst only had three of four works formally published. The fourth work, *Land of Nod,* remained unpublished and in manuscript form until it was brought out from Elizabeth Richter's personal collection for study in preparation for my lecture recital in October of 2019. Supposedly, a fifth piece, *The Lamplighter*, exists in manuscript form, but little is known about its actual whereabouts.[7]

But why did Forst compose these works for harp? The reason for this choice remains unclear, but it is possible that Forst's friendship with Lucile Lawrence may have inspired him to produce more works for the harp. In a copy of *From a Railway Carriage* that was included with Lawrence's personal music collection, there is a handwritten note from Forst in which he credits her as the inspiration for writing the work (see fig. 4.2). While this does not account for why he wrote all of these pieces, this does demonstrate that his friendship with Lucile Lawrence was a factor in his writing for harp.

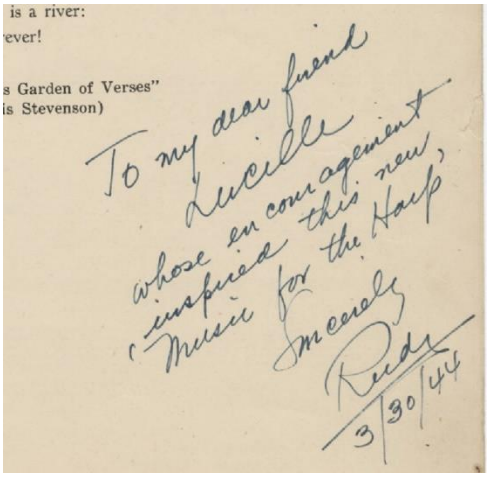

Fig. 4.2: Handwritten note from Forst to Lawrence in a copy of *From a Railway Carriage.*

[7] This information comes from a letter from one of Lucile Lawrence's former students, who mentioned that a manuscript for *The Lamplighter* existed, but did not know where it was located.

These works also allow us to gain a better understanding of Forst's approach to composing for the harp. Just as in *Homage to Ravel,* Forst continues to employ Salzedo's notational style and symbols, resulting in works that are highly idiomatic for the harp. Furthermore, Forst incorporated more of Salzedo's extended techniques, adding further color to each work. These techniques show that Forst was exploring more of the harp's sonorous qualities. Because these solo harp works are based on poetry, the inclusion of extended techniques may also have been a way to further evoke the images described in the text, which I will explain in more detail during the analytical portion of this chapter.

Throughout this chapter, I will be examining each of these works individually, taking into consideration how Forst conveyed the images and moods of the text within the music. I will also be describing any possible overarching characteristics between these works. The order of discussion will be in chronological order of publication, rather than the actual date of composition.

Analysis of *Windy Nights*

Windy Nights was the first of the four pieces Forst wrote based on Stevenson's *Garden of Verses* poems, published through Edition Musicus in 1942. The poem on which it is based depicts a child lying in bed at night, listening to the howling of the wind and a mysterious rider who passes back and forth during the night. Throughout the poem, the child wonders why the rider is out so late at night. The images of the howling wind and the mysterious rider serve as the two primary themes within the poem. Forst's rendition provides a more subtle representation of the text, with only vague evocations of the images from the poem being drawn within the music. The overall form consists of five sections, each one consisting of just one or two musical phrases. Furthermore, because these sections are so short, I found it more appropriate to label

them with lowercase letters, rather than uppercase. Because each section contains only one musical idea, I will refer to each section as its own phrase. Thus, the overall form of *Windy Nights* is a|b|c|a|b, concluding with a short closing passage. Between each section is a clear transition—the endings of sections are either punctuated by a pause or lead seamlessly into new material.

The first section of the piece, Phrase a, is characterized by a series of arpeggios in a quick sextuplet pattern. The top note of each arpeggio is accented, which helps to emphasize it as the melody (see fig. 4.3). Throughout this first section, the flowing motion of the arpeggios is unbroken—it is only at m. 16 that there are any breaks in the motion, through descending arpeggios and brief pauses. This unbroken rhythmic flow evokes the image of blowing wind. The arching arpeggios might be evocative of high-speed winds that can create a howling sound as they pass through buildings and trees. The harmonies suggest D Lydian, with the inclusion of G sharp (not included in the key signature). Rather than using standard chord progressions, Forst establishes D as the tonic through a quasi-pedal tone at the bottom of each arpeggio.

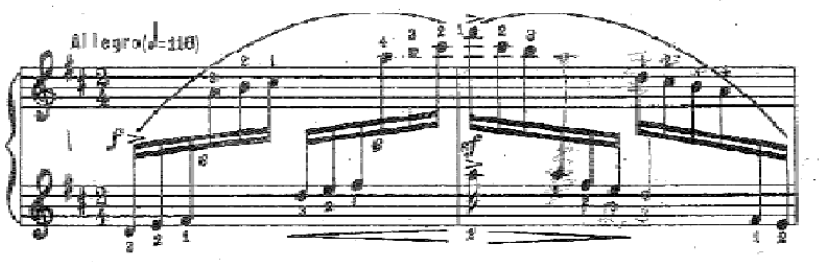

Fig. 4.3: Rudolf Forst, *Windy Nights*, mm. 1-2. The accent at the top of each arpeggio denotes it as the melody.

The next section, Phrase b, introduces a contrasting motive. Rather than continuing with the compound triplets from the previous section, the motive is in a duple rhythm that is march-like in quality; each statement of the motive begins with a 16th note pick-up on the "and" of beat one and ends with an abrupt dampening of the sound, using Salzedo's symbol for muffled chords

(see fig. 4.4). As the section progresses, the rhythm transitions from a "short-short-long-long" pattern to straight sixteenth-notes, building in intensity until an abrupt stop in m. 32. The main melody, found in the top note of each chord, consists primarily of repeated notes and stepwise motion, with a few small leaps being added at m. 25. This marching motive seems to evoke the second central idea within the poem, which is the rider on horseback. The harmonies are more ambiguous throughout this passage: the initial harmonies suggest A as the tonal center, but by the end of the passage in m. 32, a low F# octave more strongly asserts F#. At the close of Phrase b, there is a brief return of the arpeggios from the opening section, only this time centered around F#.

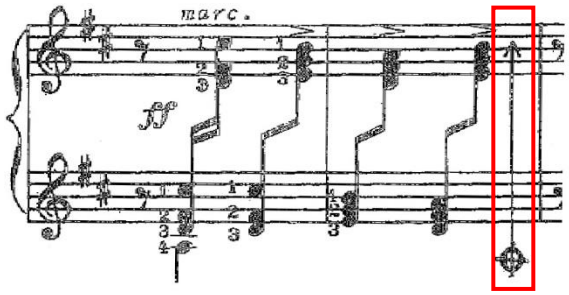

Fig. 4.4: Rudolf Forst, *Windy Nights*, mm. 19-20. The crosshatch symbol is a specialized dampening technique that requires the player to muffle the strings that have just been played, resulting in a staccato-like effect.

Phrase c is the central section, which acts as a transitional passage between the two outer halves of the piece. This passage blends thematic material from both Phrase a and b, while also modulating to a new key area (see fig. 4.5). The primary harmonies begin in a sharp key area, but abruptly switch to a flat key at m. 45, settling on Ab as a tonal center. The main melody throughout this passage is found in the accented notes in the upper part, mirrored by the top notes of the lower part. These motivic fragments move mostly in thirds and seem more like short, two-note melodic fragments, rather than one continuously cohesive melody. While the melody notes

move in eighth notes, within the upper part are also sextuplets, which are reminiscent of the sextuplet arpeggios in Phrase a.

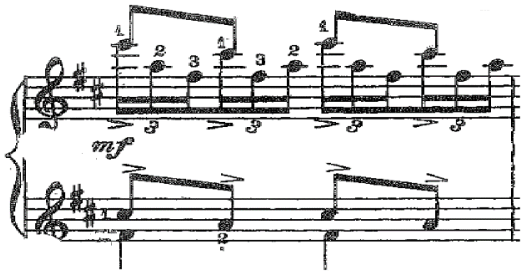

Fig. 4.5: Rudolf Forst, *Windy Nights*, mm. 40. Note direction of the stems in the upper part, indicating what pitches form the melodic line.

Phrase c transitions directly into the reprise of Phrase a, facilitated by the sextuplet rhythms. Melodically, the reprise plays out almost identically to the first iteration of Phrase a, except that the melody is abbreviated, and the phrase ending is extended. The key of this reprise is now Ab Lydian, instead of the original D Lydian. The choice to transition to Ab seems rather unusual at first glance, as Ab sits a tritone away from D—however, Ab can also be viewed enharmonically as G#, which is not only diatonic to D Lydian, but is the note that defines the Lydian mode. The reprise of Phrase b follows an identical phrase structure as its first iteration, bringing back the marching motive. However, unlike before where the tonal center was vague, the reprise of Phrase b establishes C minor much sooner, primarily because of the B-natural leading tone that appears prominently.

The closing section blends the two primary rhythmic motives, first employing the sextuplet figure from Phrase a, and ending with the more march-like rhythm of Phrase b. Perhaps to add a sense of climax, Forst implements Salzedo's Aeolian Chords in mm. 85 through 86 (see fig. 4.6); the climax is further emphasized by a molto accelerando and a caesura following m. 86. The harmonies in this section maintain C minor as the key area.

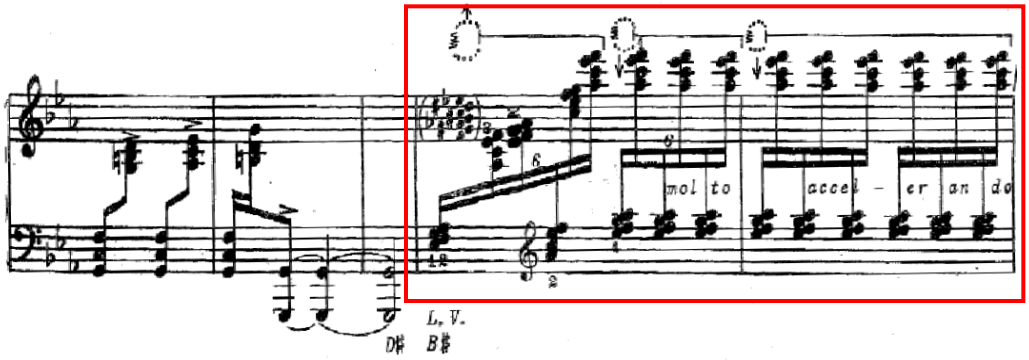

Fig. 4.6: Rudolf Forst, *Windy Nights*, mm. 81-86. Note the symbols for Aeolian Chords above mm. 85 and 86. Aeolian Chords are executed by using either the index finger or thumb to brush short glissandos across the designated pitch range. The arrows indicate whether to stroke upwards or downwards. The notes within the parentheses indicate what pitches are in the Aeolian Chords and informs the performer on how the pedals should be set.

Analysis of *From a Railway Carriage*

Although *From a Railway Carriage* (1944) was actually the last to be written, it was the second to be formally published through Edition Musicus that same year. The poem on which it is based depicts a child sitting on a train, watching the scenery go by as the train moves through the countryside. There is a reference to fairies and witches in the first line of the poem, which suggests that the rider is viewing the moving countryside with a sense of child-like imagination. *From a Railway Carriage* is a through-composed work that contains several sub-sections. While there is a reprise of previously stated materials, the contrasting material that would be considered a B section is not substantially different enough to constitute being labeled its own section. The primary intervals that make up the bulk of the melodic and harmonic content are thirds and fifths. Generating a near-ceaseless sense of forward motion is an oscillating sixteenth-note

accompaniment that moves through various pitch areas throughout the piece (see fig. 4.7). This oscillating figure may be evoking the relentless motion of the train that is described in the poem.

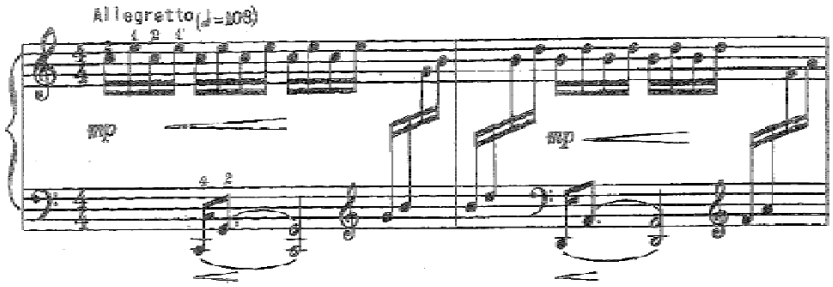

Fig. 4.7: Rudolf Forst, *From a Railway Carriage*, mm. 1-2. Note the oscillating accompaniment figure in the upper part, which is present through the majority of the piece.

The melody, which sounds both above and below the oscillating accompaniment, is comprised of sixteenth-note fragments that span across a major or minor third. These melodic fragments are short and are rhythmically similar to a Scotch snap. Their juxtaposition to the accompaniment is what generates the harmonic structure of the piece. There are occasional fifths, usually in the lower register of the harp. They either follow the same rhythmic pattern as the melody or they are played as unbroken intervals. While in some cases they are there to add resonance to the piece, from mm. 15 to 18, they also carry the melodic line, which is smooth and unbroken. Furthermore, between mm. 15 through 18, the melody moves by leaps of thirds and spans across an interval of a fifth overall (see fig. 4.8). Following m. 18, the melody returns to the more fragmented sounding Scotch-snap rhythm and maintains that characteristic for the remainder of the piece.

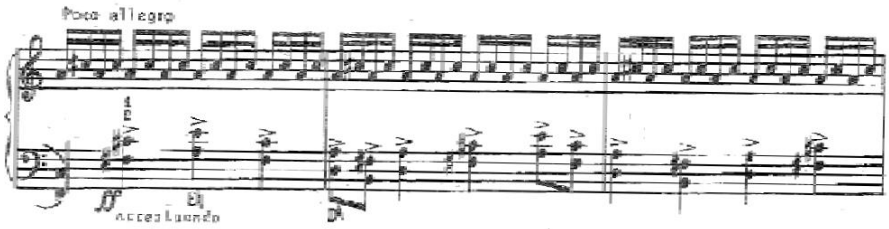

Fig. 4.8: Rudolf Forst, *From a Railway Carriage*, mm. 15-17. Note that melodic line in the lower part is doubled at the fifth and is more legato.

As stated above, the harmonies are primarily generated by the juxtaposition of the melody in relation to the accompaniment, forming either consonant or dissonant harmonies, often shifting between both within a single measure. Seventh chords occur frequently, as well as both augmented and diminished chords. What is perhaps most interesting is the nature of the chords themselves. Some of the harmonies, when built from their lowest note, are simply root position triads or seventh chords, while others could be viewed from multiple angles, leaving questions as to which note is the actual root. In some measures, the dissonances are merely passing tones, as can be seen in m. 6. Here, the entire measure is a G-major seventh chord, with the C# and E appearing as passing tones (see fig. 4.9).

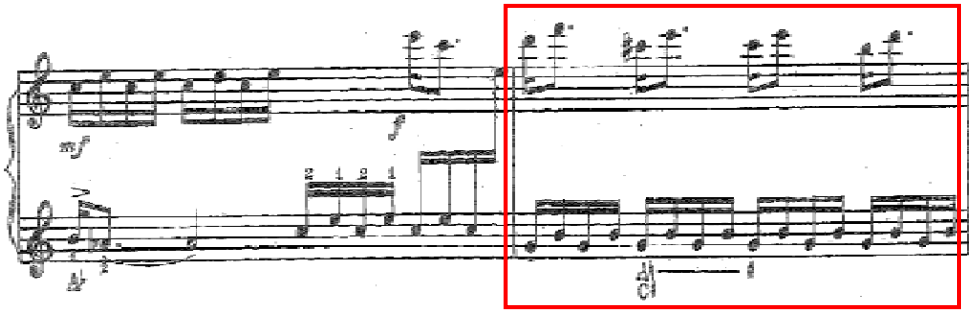

Fig. 4.9: Rudolf Forst, *From a Railway Carriage*, mm. 5-6. The box highlights the G-major seventh chord, with the C# and E passing tones.

Tonal centers, though at times obscured by the harmonic motion, are present within *From a Railway Carriage*. The piece opens and closes in C major, but throughout the inner sections of the piece other non-related tonal centers emerge. In the central passage at m. 15, the tonal center could either be viewed as F# or A major. Between these transitions are movements through tonal centers of G, B, F, and A, if basing this analysis on the lowest note of the accompaniment. This progression is also foreshadowed in the opening four measures. While each of these notes is diatonic within the key of C, it is the melody notes that containing the accidentals that create a sense of harmonic motion away from C major and ultimately toward A/F#.

The tonal center between mm. 15 and 18 is slightly ambiguous, because the accompaniment seems to emphasize A as the tonic, while the low fifth in m. 16 seems to emphasize F#. However, coming out of this passage, the tonal center is more firmly centered on A, though it is obscured by the dissonances introduced by the melody. Following the central passage between mm. 15 and 18, Forst uses a harmonic sequence that is similar to the one in the first half of the piece, only this time moving through A, E, G# (spelled as Ab), D, and finally F#. The beginning of the closing section makes a swift transition from F# back to C, moving from F# to C to E and then Bb, through two phrases. While harmonically the roots of the two chords in each measure are a tritone apart, this is obscured through the use of second inversion for the first chord, which gives the impression of a chromatic descending bass pattern (see fig. 4.10). It is unexpected that Forst would use bVII to move back into C, but by measure 30, the piece is firmly back in C major.

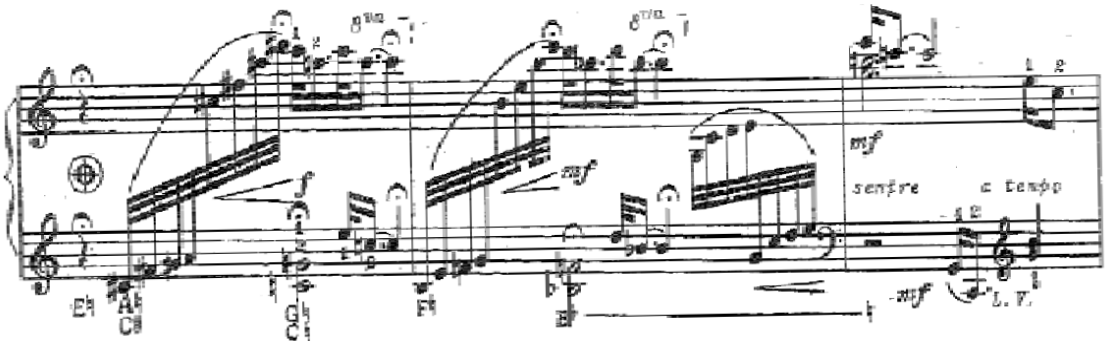

Fig. 4.10: Rudolf Forst, *From a Railway Carriage*, mm. 28-30. Note how the lowest notes of each figure in mm. 28-29 form a descending bass line.

Throughout the piece, there is a continuous flow of sixteenth notes, within which the melody fits neatly. This continuous sense of motion only ceases in m. 28, with an abrupt fermata. This is then followed by sweeping, upward arpeggios of thirty-second notes, alternating with diminutive iterations of the melodic fragments. The Scotch-snap rhythm returns afterwards, but is now played with chords as the accompaniment, rather than with the oscillating figure.

Analysis of *Looking Glass River*

Though technically one of the earliest of the pieces to be written (dated 1941), *Looking Glass River* was not formally published until 1965, when Lucile Lawrence included it in her *Solos for the Harp Player* collection. The poem on which this piece is based depicts a child by the edge of a river. In the beginning, the surface of the water is so still that it is as reflective as a mirror. The stillness is disrupted by various events that generate rings on the surface of the water, with the child remarking on how the rings in the water seem to chase each other.

Looking Glass River is in ternary form with a short coda at the end. The opening A section begins with the introduction of a bass ostinato pattern that forms an arch; at its lowest range, it has an octave in the lowest register of the harp, while at its highest, there is an appoggiatura. This bass pattern in the first section functions in two ways: first, it establishes the tonal center of F and second, it establishes the rhythmic flow, which moves in straight quarter notes, evoking the sense of a flowing river. The melody that is introduced in m. 3 shares a similar contour, while encompassing a shorter range within the harp's upper register. Both the ostinato pattern and the melody are palindromic in nature (see fig. 4.11). This may be an allusion to the "looking-glass" aspect of the poem.

The tonal center is loosely based around F, primarily through the ostinato bass pattern, which acts as a pedal tone. Above the bass line, the melody moves in major triads, which provide harmonic contrast from the static open F sound in the bass pattern. Because each triad is major, the accidentals that are added generate dissonance, as they are not diatonic to either F major or minor. However, the opening ostinato and the contrast between registers make the dissonances sound more like passing tones.

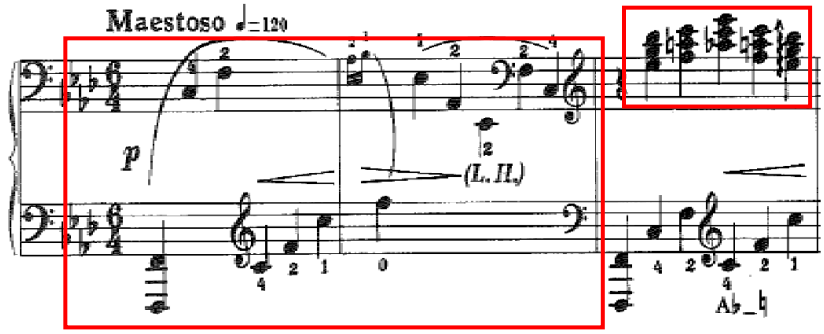

Fig. 4.11: Rudolf Forst, *Looking Glass River*, mm. 1-3. Note the symmetrical contour of the accompanimental and melodic lines.

Within the B section, a contrasting two-note motive is introduced. In this section, both parts are similar, but feature slightly different rhythms; in the lower part, the player maintains consistent pulse of quarter notes, while in the upper part, there is an alternating pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes (see fig. 4.12). At first, the B theme alternates with measures that are more similar to the opening, but as the section progresses it gradually takes over. This section is quite unstable harmonically, with no real tonal center being established. It is also more dissonant than the A section, and all of the harmonies are built on seventh chords with changing inner notes that alter their qualities beyond major or minor. As the section progresses, the harmonies do stabilize, finally settling by m. 26 as the piece transitions into the return of A.

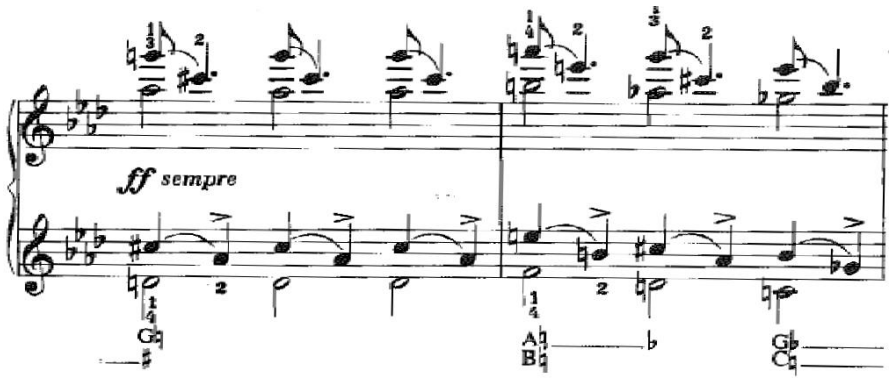

Fig. 4.12: Rudolf Forst, *Looking Glass River*, mm. 20-21.Both the upper and lower part are similar, but feature different rhythms.

The reprise of A places the tonal center around C# rather than F, but plays out in a nearly identical fashion, bringing back the palindromic ostinato and melody. What is interesting is the relationship between the two keys of F and C#. If using the enharmonic spelling of C#, the key becomes Db, which has a chromatic mediant relationship to F. The reprise of A ends with a slowing of motion, ending on B natural, which is the bVII of C#. Although it can be seen as a cadential motion, it is significantly weaker than if Forst chose to use the stronger motion of B# to C#, or a V-I motion. The final passage, characterized by open chords adorned with appoggiaturas, does employ the leading tone, B#, but only within the grace-note figure, where it sounds more like a neighbor tone. It is further weakened by the presence of the lowered-second and sixth scale degrees, and eventually the third as well. The final chords revisit harmonies from the B section.

Analysis of *Land of Nod*

Perhaps the most interesting work among this collection is *Land of Nod.* Written in 1941, the work was never published, but remained stored away in manuscript form. The original manuscript features both Forst's writing and a few notes from Lucile Lawrence, suggesting that Forst was consulting her when writing this piece (see fig. 4.13). Though similar to the other pieces in terms of its overall harmonic and melodic structure, *Land of Nod* demonstrates a higher level of experimental writing for the harp, including more complex pedal sequences, greater motivic development, and several meter changes.

Stevenson's poem depicts a child who navigates time spent in the land of Nod, a place of dreams. The child makes note of the various images seen during their dreams, which range from pleasant to frightening. The end of the poem also comments on the child's difficulty in waking up and in remembering the music they heard in their dreams.

Land of Nod is written in a through-composed form, with several subsections within. Some sections feature contrasting material, while others feature reiterations of previous material, but in a varied fashion. As in *From a Railway Carriage,* the varying images described within the text are evoked through the varying degrees of dissonance within the harmonies. Pleasant images are linked to less dissonant and consonant harmonies. An eerie or frightening image might be reflected in a more dissonant passage. A sense of confusion and wandering could be linked to areas where the harmonies move back and forth or are more static. The general harmonies range from major or minor sevenths to near tone-cluster-like chords. The piece begins and ends with B as a tonal center, but throughout the piece the harmonies are unstable, only really coming to emphasize B as the final tonal center around m. 51[8], similar to the harmonic scheme in *From a Railway Carriage*.

Throughout the piece, there are several small motivic ideas that appear throughout the piece. *Land of Nod* opens with broken octaves, moving from B to A, then B to E. Between these sets of octaves are low chords that mirror the melodic motion, as well as emphasizing the B tonal center. The next motive is a more extensive melody that evokes a "rocking" motion in its contour, usually comprised of a step followed by a leap of a fourth or fifth and repeated notes (see fig. 4.14). The accompanimental figure begins as gentle upward arpeggios, then later changing to oscillating chords, both of which further emphasize of feeling of "rocking." This melody develops continuously from m. 3 to m. 25, in which there is a pause; throughout this passage, the melody maintains its basic step-leap motion, gradually adding chords to flesh out the harmonies and later sixteenth notes to forward the sense of motion. The harmonies become

[8] The measure numbers in this analysis on based on a digital engraving of the original manuscript (left unnumbered), which begins the numbering with an incomplete first measure.

more dissonant between mm. 3 and 25 as well, beginning more diatonically and gradually including more accidentals and augmented harmonies.

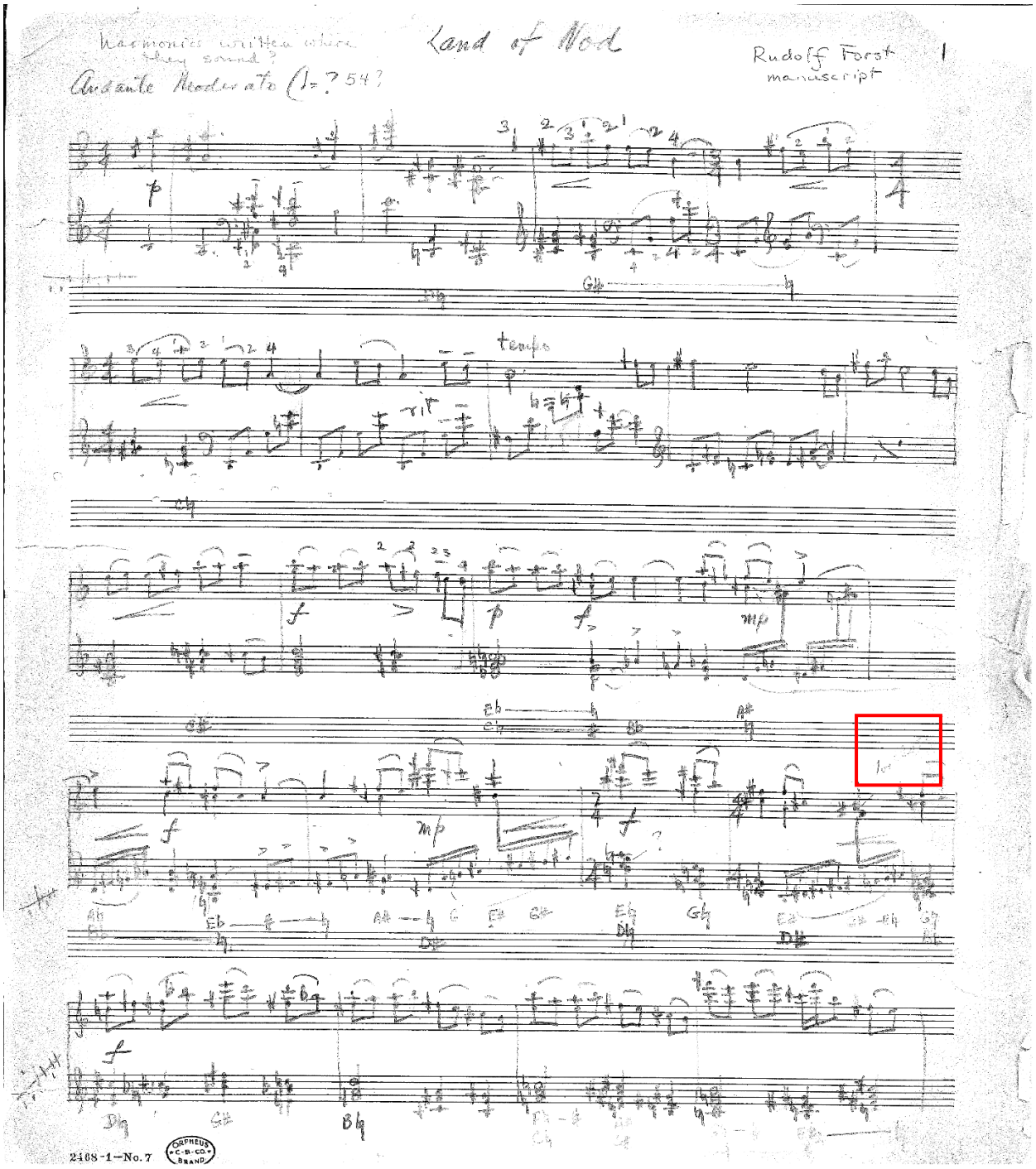

Fig. 4.13: Rudolf Forst, *Land of Nod*, original manuscript, page 1. The annotation highlighted in red is a note from Lucile Lawrence that states “too close,” in which she is remarking that the right- and left-hand parts are written too close in proximity.

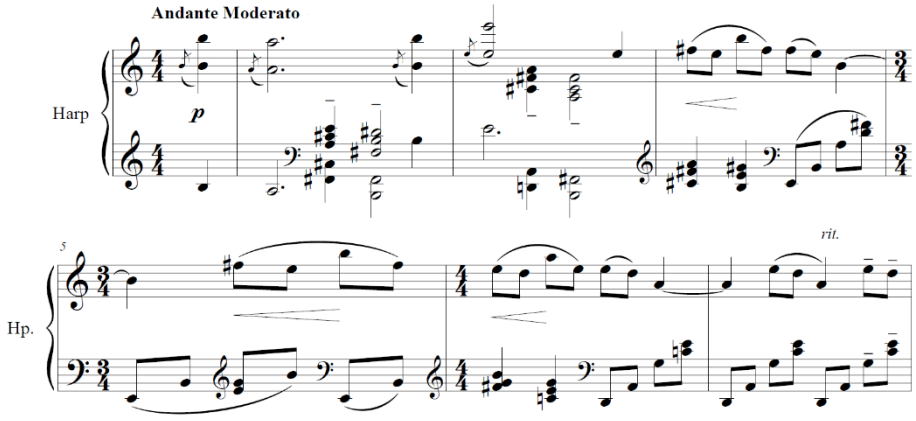

Fig. 4.14: Rudolf Forst, *Land of Nod*, mm. 1-7. The pick-up into measure 4 marks the beginning of the "rocking" motive.

At m. 27, there is a contrast of motion through the thirty-second-note arpeggios punctuated with eighth-note seconds and broken octaves. The first arpeggio consists of a D-augmented chord followed by a B-diminished chord, which generates a sharp dissonance compared to the previous section. The second arpeggio in m. 29 is more pentatonic in quality, which alleviates the tension established by the first. The broken octaves are reminiscent of those found in the opening and they set the tone for the return of the "rocking motive" in m. 32. There are echoes of the octaves from the opening, only this time they are played as harmonics and sound more like B minor than B major (see fig. 4.15). A varied form of the "rocking motive" is introduced in m. 43, which features shortened statements of melody, but with a similar contour. As the section progresses, the melody becomes more fragmented, with just two or three notes per statement.

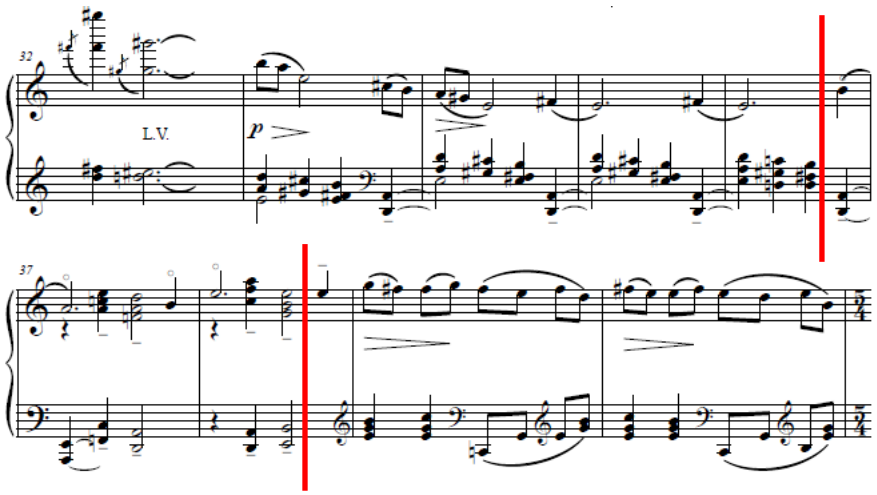

Fig. 4.15: Rudolf Forst, *Land of Nod*, mm. 32-40. Between mm. 36 and 38, there is a recall of the opening phrase.

There is much greater rhythmic variety in *Land of Nod* than in any of the other pieces. While throughout most of the piece there is a consistent sense of motion through the accompaniment, there are more instances where the rhythm is interrupted, either surreptitiously through the inclusion of sixteenth notes, or drastically, as in mm. 26 through 31. As stated earlier, there are also instances where the meter changes, a trait not seen in any of the other pieces based on Stevenson's poems. While the dominant meter is 4/4, there are instances of 3/4, 2/4 and 5/4, though any change in meter is imperceptible to the ear, which may serve to heighten a dream-like sensation. In keeping with the dreaming theme of the piece, many of the rhythms have a sense of a rocking motion, either through leaps between registers, gently ascending arpeggios, or oscillating patterns.

Connecting Stylistic Elements

Although each of the pieces Forst wrote based on Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* was published individually, because they were all based on poems from the same collection, I want to briefly explore elements that connect the pieces, either motivically or stylistically. In my analyses of the four of Forst's works based on *A Child's Garden of Verses*, I

noticed that there was an overarching motivic figure. Each piece contains some iteration of a two-note motive or pattern that usually spans an interval of a third or fourth. In *Windy Nights*, it is found within Phrase c and occurs in an even eighth-note pattern. In *From a Railway Carriage*, it is present in the Scotch-snap motives. In *Looking Glass River*, it is found in the B section, in the upper part that uses a "short-long" rhythmic motion. Finally, in *Land of Nod*, it appears in the final section, first in the accompaniment and later, in the coda (see fig. 4.16). Each piece treats this figure differently, with some employing it more frequently than others.

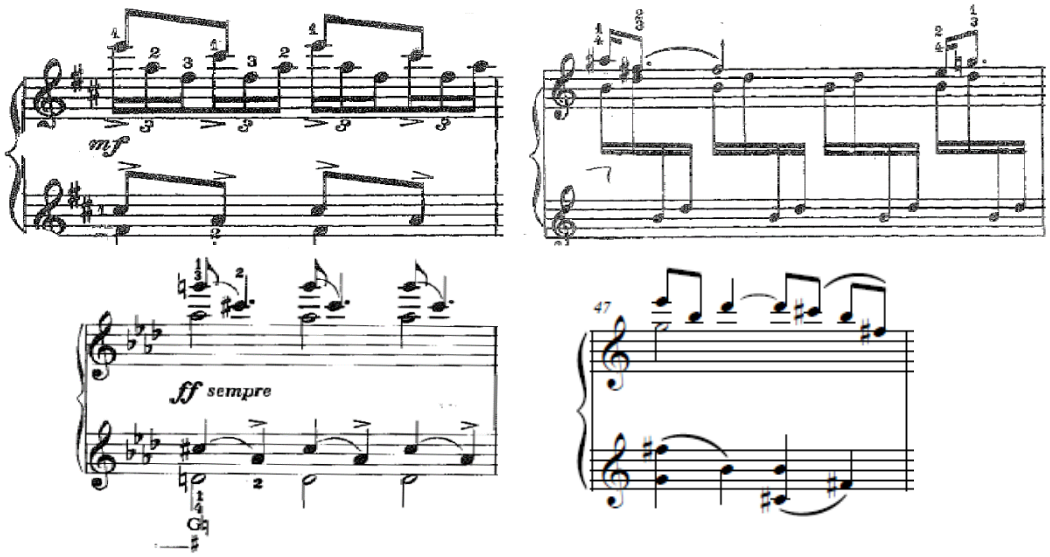

Fig. 4.16: One example of the two-note motive from each work. From top to bottom, left to right: *Windy Nights*, m. 40; *From a Railway Carriage*, m. 7; *Looking Glass River*, m. 20; and *Land of Nod*, m. 47.

However, the appearance of a recurring melodic fragment is not enough evidence to confirm that these works were meant to be connected as a set. The fact that Forst had them individually published weakens claims of overarching themes and might speak more of Forst's general style of writing during the 1940s. The harmonic language between all four pieces is quite similar, but that is too general to stand on its own. The two-note motive may be the only distinctive feature that serves as evidence of an overarching element. However, this figure's

appearance in each piece could be because thirds have a sing-song quality to them, which is characteristic of many children's songs. Perhaps it was a means for Forst to subtly evoke a child-like quality to these works, even amidst a more complex harmonic language. Without written evidence that Forst intended to compile the works into a single collection of pieces, it is impossible to draw a final conclusion on the matter. Perhaps if more pieces by Forst based on Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses* emerge that contain similar devices, a stronger case could be made.

Impressionistic Aspects within Forst's Works Based on *A Child's Garden of Verses*

These four works shed some light on Forst's musical style and suggest some influence of Impressionism, an arts movement that originated in France during the late nineteenth century that also encompassed written work in the form of Symbolism.[9] Impressionist artists often played with aspects of lighting and spatial dimensions in their artwork and generally placed less emphasis on the actual subjects.[10] Symbolist writings followed a similar line of thought, with writers often being more interested in the sounds of words, rather than their direct meaning.[11] This concept worked its way into music, which became characterized by short melodic lines, non-traditional harmonic progressions (such as seventh chords that serve no harmonic function), and loose evocations of images, primarily in the music of Debussy.[12] These characteristics can be seen in Forst's pieces based on *A Child's Garden of Verses*. Each one of the *Garden of Verses* pieces blends harmony, rhythms, melodies, timbres, and various effects in order to loosely evoke

[9] Jann Pasler, "Impressionism," *Oxford Music Online*, accessed September 10, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.50026.
[10] Joseph Auner, "Expanding Musical Worlds," in *Music in the Twentieth and Twenty First Centuries* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013), 29.
[11] Ibid, 27.
[12] Ibid, 28.

the images or events with their respective poems. The way that Forst evokes images from the poems is not through direct emphasis, but rather in a more fluid and atmospheric manner.

There are further clues within the pieces that suggest an Impressionistic influence. One example can be found in *Looking Glass River*, which employs the use of planing, or the progression of parallel chords that serve no harmonic function. Planing was one of the standard techniques used in Impressionistic music (see fig. 4.10). The avoidance of traditional chord progressions, augmented/seventh harmonies, and the overall vague sense of tonality each piece demonstrates also serve to suggest the influence of Impressionism. Not once does Forst utilize a traditional cadence to firmly establish a key, but instead avoids them as much as possible. Whenever the music modulates to a new key, even if the tonic of the new key is diatonic to the previous one, Forst's means of modulation is not through typical means, such as a the use of a pivot chord, but by progressing through various, seemingly unrelated chords.

Impressionist composers often eschewed traditional major and minor scales and incorporated modal, whole-tone, and pentatonic scales instead.[13] Forst employs a great deal of dissonance, particularly seventh chords that serve negligible harmonic function, another trait that was common in Impressionistic music. The level of dissonance within each chord varies depending on the music, but generally, in Forst's works, the dissonances are usually major or minor sevenths, with occasional augmented and diminished harmonies interspersed. As with the case of other elements, the text often dictates the harmonic content. In some cases, the harmonies are also modal in nature, as is the case in *Windy Nights*, which leans more toward a Lydian mode at times. Near the end of *Looking Glass River,* there are faint hints of Phrygian mode. However,

[13] Pasler, "Impressionism."

Forst's harmonic language does not typically include whole-tone scales, a trademark characteristic of Impressionist music, although some augmented harmonies can be heard.

Impressionism is not the only influence that can be seen in Forst's works based on *A Child's Garden of Verses*, but it is one of the more identifiable. Because American composers were exposed to an eclectic blend of influences, Forst's musical style likely reflected this eclecticism as well. However, the way in which Forst loosely evokes the imagery within each poem is evidence that there is at least some influence of Impressionism.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have analyzed each of Forst's works based on *A Child's Garden of Verses*. My analyses have confirmed some influence of Impressionist writing in Forst's musical style. In the case of Forst's works based on *A Child's Garden of Verses*, his approach to conveying the text was more to generate an overall atmosphere and loose evocations of images, rather than providing a narrative, which is characteristic of Impressionist writing. Further, Forst employed non-traditional harmonic progressions and established tonal centers through compositional devices such as pedal tones and weaker cadential movements, avoiding V-I progressions and leading tones in each piece.

By understanding these links between Stevenson's poems and Forst's music, performers can tailor their playing to bring out the musical characteristics that evoke the imagery from the poems. In a copy of *From a Railway Carriage* in Lucile Lawrence's collection, there are handwritten markings that suggest that Lawrence was adding plectric sounds to certain melodic lines (see fig. 4.17). Performers may similarly experiment with different extended techniques, but should take care not to take too many liberties.

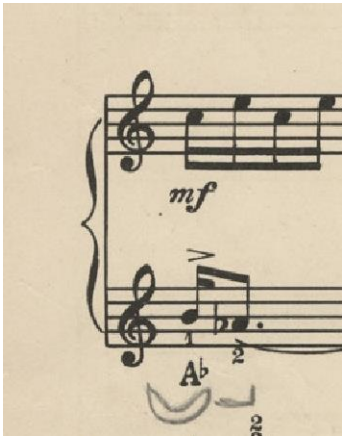

Fig. 4.17: An excerpt from Lucile Lawrence's copy of *From a Railway Carriage*. The half-moon at the bottom is Salzedo's symbol for plectric sounds, in which the performer plucks at the base the string with their fingernail.

Following the completion of these pieces, Forst seemingly took a break from writing solo works for the harp. Between *Looking Glass River* and *Sequences* is a 28-year gap, though it is not clear whether this is because Forst was simply preoccupied with other projects or if he was actually writing works for the harp, but not publishing them. In the next chapter, I will examine *Sequences* and assess stylistic changes that may be present.

Chapter Five

Investigating Forst's Stylistic Evolution in *Sequences*

Introduction

After the publication of *From a Railway Carriage* in 1944, Forst apparently did not compose another solo harp work until nearly thirty years later. In 1972, Forst completed *Sequences* for solo harp, and it was published posthumously in 1976 through Harold Branch Publishing. As of 2020, it is Forst's last-known contribution to the solo harp literature. Because there is no background information available about *Sequences,* we have no explanation for why Forst waited 28 years after *From a Railway Carriage* to complete another work for harp. There also are no clues as to what might have inspired *Sequences,* nor any hints that it may have been commissioned by someone. However, we can learn much from analyzing it and begin to understand how Forst's compositional approach to harp writing evolved.

Before we can examine *Sequences,* it is helpful to define what a sequence is in this context. In its most traditional musical sense, a sequence is defined as "[a] melodic or polyphonic idea consisting of a short figure or motif stated successively at different pitch levels, so that it moves up or down a scale by equidistant intervals."[1] Sequences of this nature are most typically found in Baroque and Classical music, but not as commonly seen in twentieth-century compositions. In a non-musical sense, a sequence can be defined as either "the order in which things happen or should happen," or "a group of things that come one after another."[2] Luciano Berio's 14 *Sequenzas* (for various instrumentations) embody a late-twentieth-century notion of sequencing, which seems more in line with the non-musical definitions. Within Berio's

[1] William Drabkin, "Sequence (ii)," *Oxford Music Online,* accessed November 21, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.25439.
[2] "Sequence," *The Learner's Dictionary,* accessed November, 21, 2020, https://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/sequence.

Sequenzas, including his *Sequenza II* for solo harp, the sequencing entails the alteration of octave placement and rhythmic proportions, as well as the addition or subtraction of pitches to a melodic set.[3] As will be discussed below, Forst applies a similar general principle to *Sequences,* rather than the Baroque or Classical pitch formula.

Analysis of *Sequences*

Upon first glance, there are already several noticeable differences between *Sequences* and Forst's earlier works from the 1940s. Overall, the piece is substantially longer, sitting at thirteen pages in length—Forst's earlier solos were between three and five pages, at most. There are also no bar lines, nor are there any meter markings.[4] Various tempo designations scattered throughout the piece serve as the most definitive structural guide, providing a clear pulse and a sense of direction.

The form of *Sequences* can be described as three large sections, A|B|A. However, the reprise of A is substantially truncated, and it also could be viewed as a coda-like passage, rather than a full section on its own. Each section contains several subsections that are comprised of short motivic ideas (labeled motives a through f) that are repeated, expanded, and varied, similar to the *Fortspinnung* found in Baroque music.

The A section is characterized by rapid arpeggios and fragmented rhythmic patterns. It can be divided into three subsections. Within the first subsection, from lines 1 through 7, there are three main motives. Motive a is introduced at the beginning of the piece and is characterized by an ascending arpeggio that combines an augmented quartal chord and a minor-seventh chord. At the end of motive a is a Scotch-snap rhythm from F#-C; these pitches are also the first two notes of the arpeggio (see fig. 5.1). Motive b, introduced in line 2, is characterized by jumping

[3] David Osmond-Smith, *Berio's Sequenzas*, ed. Janet K. Halfyard (Hampshire, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007), 2.
[4] Because there are no bar lines, I have numbered each line and will refer to those in my analysis.

intervals, either as regular sixteenths or as quintuplets. Motive c is introduced in the second half of line 2 and features a melody in a lower voice, with an accompaniment in the upper part (see fig 5.2). Each of these motives is varied and by line 4, further variation of the end of motive a plays out until the end of line 7, with a single repeat of motive b in line 6.

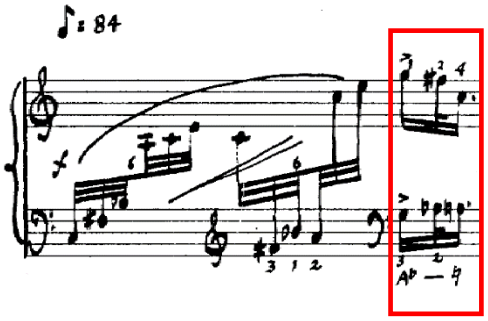

Fig. 5.1: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences*, line 1, motive a. The box highlights the Scotch snap that becomes more prominent later in the piece.

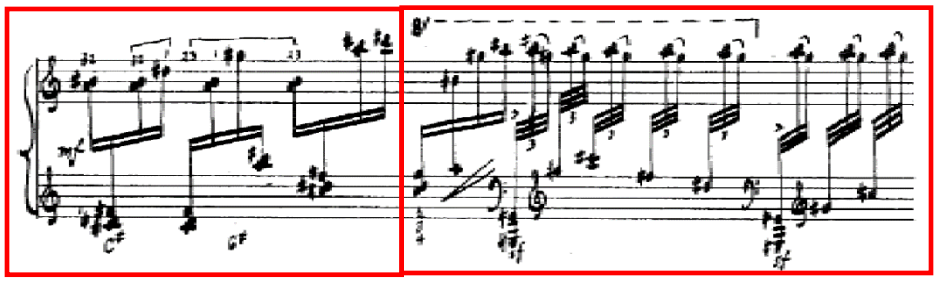

Fig. 5.2: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences*, line 2, motive b (left) and motive c (right).

The next subsection of A begins in line 8, opening with a full statement of motive a that immediately moves into motive d, which features a melodic line in a lower voice with rapid arpeggios above (see fig. 5.3). As motive d progresses, it gradually morphs into a variant of motive a, employing just the arpeggios. In line 10, the end of motive a is presented in an extended manner. From lines 11 through 15, varied iterations of the two melodic ideas from motive a are presented, the most prominent being rapid, oscillating arpeggios. Forst includes a

bisbigliando-like sequence in line 12 and glissandos in line 14, the only times these techniques occur (see fig. 5.4).[5] Line 15 segues directly into the next subsection in line 16.

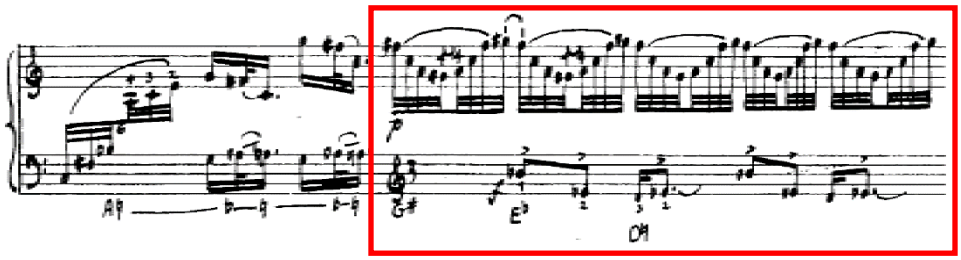

Fig. 5.3: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences,* line 8, motive d.

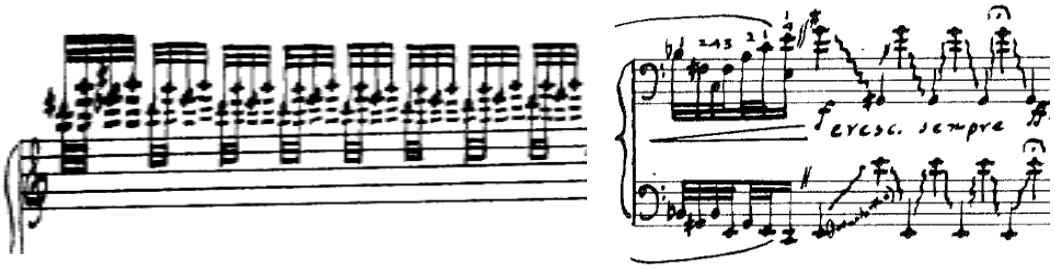

Fig. 5.4: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences,* line 12 and 14. Line 12 features a bisbigliando-like pattern (left) while line 14 features glissandos (right).

In line 16, the start of the third and last subsection of A, a variant of motive d is heard. Rather than arching up and down, the arpeggios are ascending tetrachords (see fig. 5.5). The melody in the lower voice begins in the upper register of the harp and gradually moves into the lower register. The pitch content in both parts is nearly the same as in motive a (C, F#, Bb, A, and G), but E#, D#, and G# also appear through this section. At the end of this subsection in the first half of line 20, there is an abrupt pause followed by four chords, again built on the pitches from motive a (see fig. 5.6).

[5] A bisbigliando (transl. "whispering" or "murmuring") is a rapid tremolo between specific pitches, either on enharmonic notes or on a chord. Enharmonic tremolos are only possible on the pedal harp.

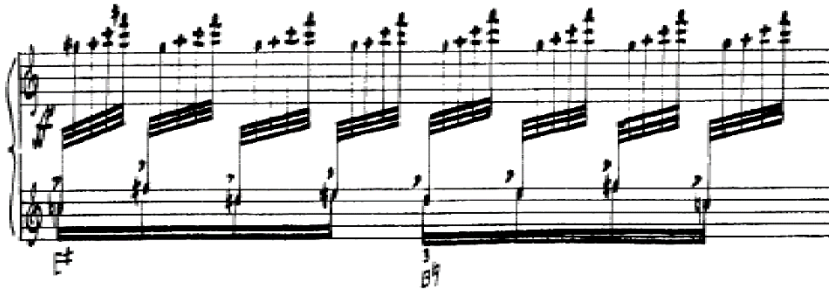

Fig. 5.5: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences,* line 16. Ascending tetrachords.

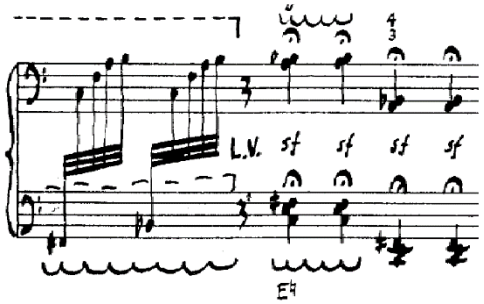

Fig. 5.6: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences,* line 20. There is an abrupt rest followed by four chords, built on C, E, F#, A, and Bb. (Note the use of *près de la table* (the half-circle line), which requires the performer to pluck the string near the soundboard of the harp, resulting in a nasal, guitar-like sound.)

The B section is more legato and lyrical in quality, serving as a sharp contrast to the energy seen in A. The B section can be divided into two large subsections that each presents three new motives. The first subsection of B extends from the end of line 20 through the start of line 30. The opening of this subsection begins with two statements of an ascending arpeggio, built on fourths, motive e. The first statement begins on C# and the second is transposed to F# (see fig. 5.7). Following this, motive f is stated in line 21, characterized by oscillating sextuplets that sequence in a descending motion. The harmonies of these arpeggios are built on intervals of fourths and fifths (see fig. 5.8).

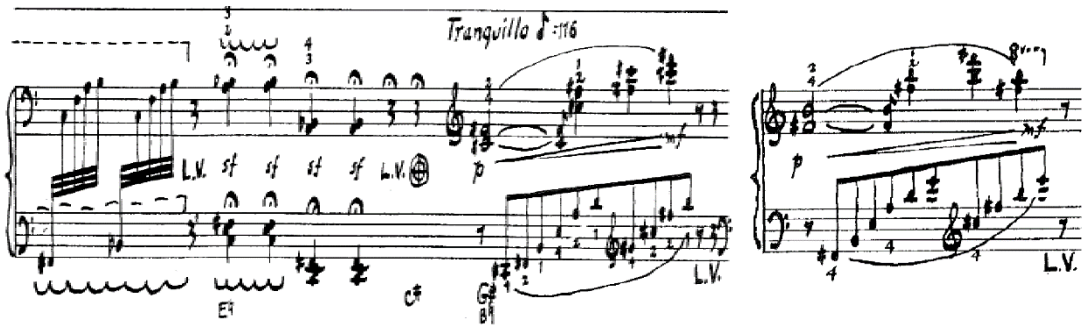

Fig. 5.7: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences*, line 20 and 21. The *Tranquillo* section beginning in line 1 (left) presents motive e, which is repeated up a perfect fourth in line 17 (right).

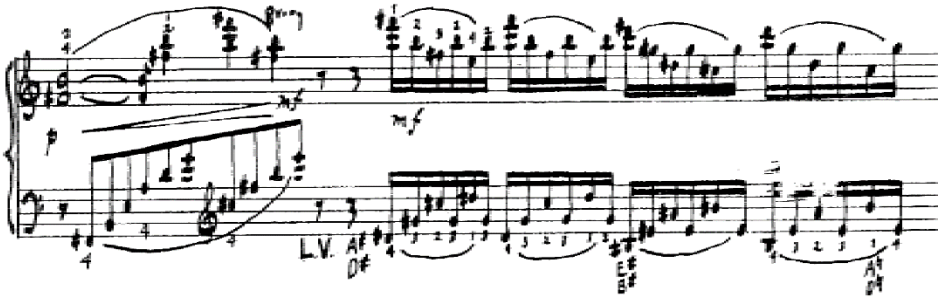

Fig. 5.8: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences,* line 21. Motive f begins after the rest and continues through line 18.

The *Energico* passage beginning in line 22 is a variant of motive e, this time with shorter arpeggios. The *Tranquillo meno tempo* that begins in line 23 is also a variant of motive e, which extends through line 24 and is followed by another brief *Energico* passage (see fig. 5.9). In line 25, a variant of motive f is presented, featuring a slightly different pattern of motion, and the harmonies progress from one chord to another at a faster rate, generating more dissonance (see fig. 5.10). At line 26, a variant of motive a is presented and alternates between statements of motive f until line 28, where the *Tranquillo meno tempo* variant of motive e returns (see fig. 5.11). The first subsection of B ends with descending chords in line 29 and an extended upward arpeggio from the end of line 29 into the beginning of line 30.

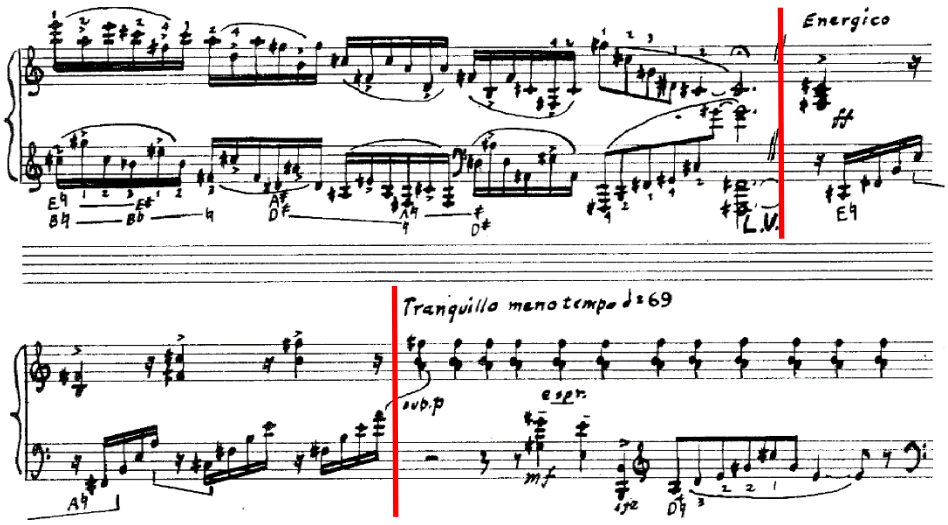

Fig. 5.9: Forst, *Sequences*, line 22-23. Both the *Energico* and the *Tranquillo meno tempo* could be viewed as variants of motive e.

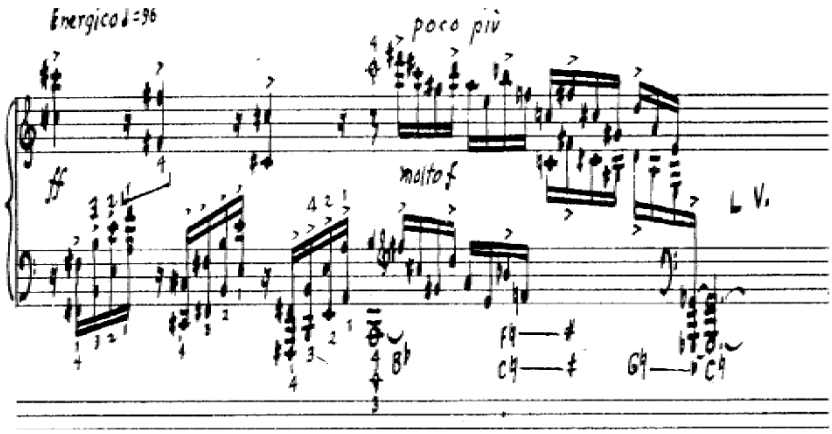

Fig. 5.10: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences*, line 25. Following the *Energico*, a variant of motive f is seen.

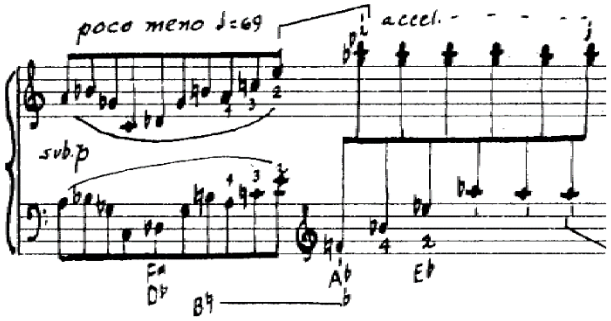

Fig. 5.11: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences*, line 25. A variant of motive a (left) followed by a variant of motive e (right).

The second subsection of B begins with a statement of motive e, in its original sense, followed by a statement of motive f. Starting in line 33, motives from A appear and this subsection could be viewed as a retransitional passage of sorts. In line 33, a variant of motive d returns (see fig. 5.12), which extends from line 33 through line 39, where a passage similar to the ending of A can be heard. After another passage of the *Tranquillo* variant of motive e, there is an extended passage employing the Scotch-snap fragments from motive a at the end of line 40 (see fig. 5.13). In line 44, there are arpeggios that anticipate the return of motive a and the reprise of the A section, which starts in line 48.

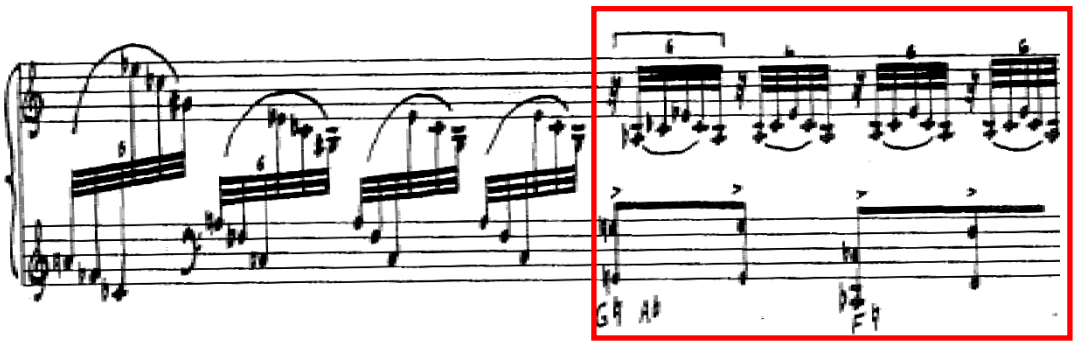

Fig. 5.12: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences,* line 33. The box highlights a motive d variant.

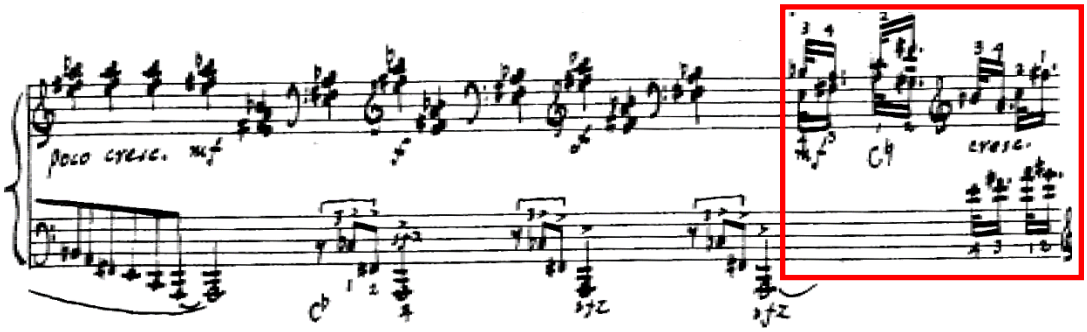

Fig. 5.13: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences,* line 40. The box shows the Scotch-snap figure from motive a.

The reprise of A is substantially shortened. It begins similarly to the opening of the piece, but statements of motive a and b are truncated, and motive b is varied. Motive c also returns in line 51. For the remainder of A, the piece mostly alternates between statements of motive b and fragments of the Scotch-snap rhythm from motive a. The piece ends with the Scotch-snap rhythm, in a surprisingly strong cadential motion of B# to C# (see fig. 5.14).

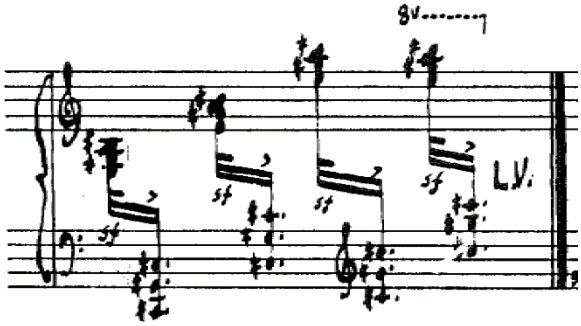

Fig. 5.14: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences*, line 52. The final cadence of the piece is marked by a strong B#-C# motion.

Most of the rhythmic figures in *Sequences* are ascending and descending arpeggios, often in an oscillating pattern. Interspersed throughout are short melodic fragments, typically in the form of a Scotch-snap rhythm, which contrast against the more legato arpeggios. The A section features the greatest diversity of rhythm, while the B section typically showcases different types of arpeggios. The B section is also more legato overall, with a few pauses included as new subsections occur, while the A section is more fragmented sounding. *Sequences* is built primarily on motives a through f, which are repeated and altered throughout the piece. The melodies themselves are not particularly lyrical, and in some places, there is no distinct melody at all. Where there is a clear melody, it is usually played in the lower voice, either as single notes or as octaves, and generally moves either by leaps of thirds or fourths or by step (or a combination of the two).

Within the A section, the harmonies are mostly dissonant, tending toward either augmented or diminished chords. Tritone intervals are also prominent, usually F#-C. There is typically no relationship between chords nor are there strongly emphasized tonal centers. Occasionally there are quartal chords that ease the sense of dissonance. The B section is less dissonant, employing more quartal and quintal harmonies, though it becomes more dissonant in the second subsection, as the piece transitions back toward the reprise of A. The final section is as dissonant as the first. Although the piece seems to be largely atonal, there are specific harmonies that recur throughout, though a clear tonal center is never established. *Sequences* also ends on a C#, which is approached by a leading tone B#, an unusually strong cadential motion when compared to Forst's earlier works.

However, there is one chord that is featured consistently throughout the piece, particularly in the first and third sections. It is first introduced in the opening of the piece and is presented as an arpeggio with the pitches C, F#, Bb, A, C, and E. There also might be a G, F# and C fragment that is sometimes attached to it. Occasionally, this figure is varied and built on a C# instead of a C natural. Other times, the Bb and A are flipped so that the A occurs first. It is also presented in various rhythms as well. The most common presentation is as an arpeggio, but in a few places, it is presented as chords (see fig. 5.15). While it does not appear as frequently in the B section, it does appear toward the reprise of the A section. Perhaps this chord is serving as the harmonic center, functioning in a manner similar to a tonal center.

The type of sequencing found in *Sequences* is most in line with the non-musical definitions, and the piece can be viewed as a series of musical events that occur one after another, with various events repeating throughout. In this context, the musical events are related to the various subsections that introduce and alter motives a through f. For instance, in lines 16

through 20, the melody notes start out as C, D#, E#, and F#, but as the passage progresses, the D# and E# are dropped and A, Bb, and G are added in line 23. Throughout line 23 through, the melody line descends into the bass register before stopping abruptly (see fig. 5.16).

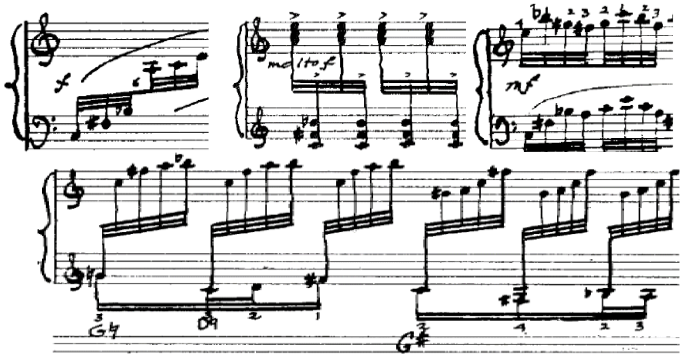

Fig. 5.15: The primary iterations of the C-F#-Bb-A-C-E chord. Its original iteration in line 1 (top left), as chords in line 6 (top middle), oscillating arpeggios in line 11 (top right) and with the Bb and A reversed in line 19 (bottom).

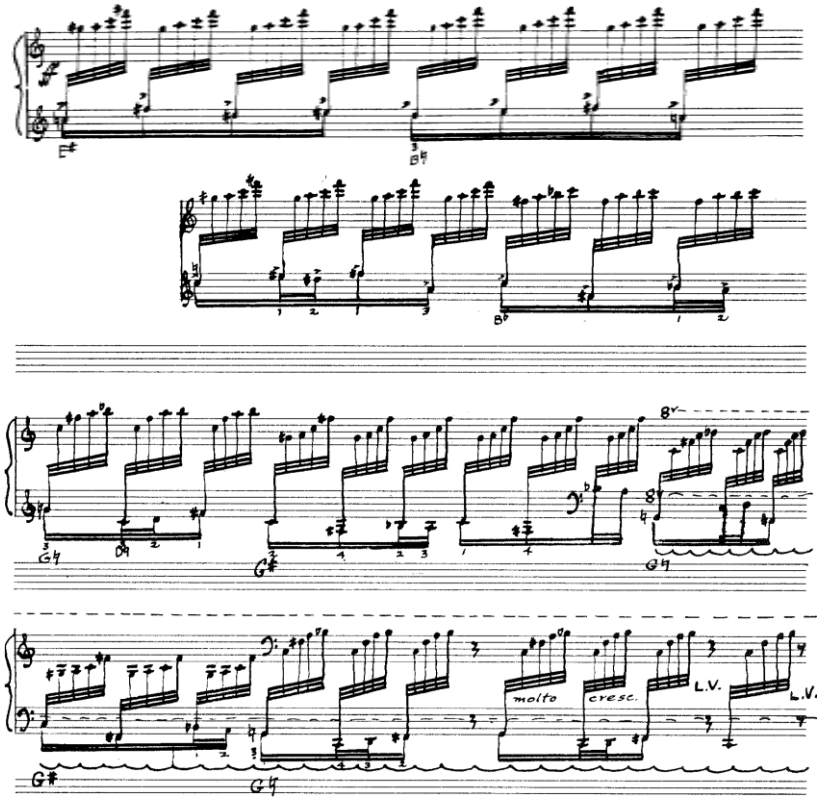

Fig. 5.16: Rudolf Forst, *Sequences* lines 17-20. Both the melody and the accompaniment gradually shift down in register, using the same notes, but in slightly different iterations, particularly in the lower part.

Sequences presents a great deal of motivic repetition that may slightly align it with our musical understanding of the term, but often times, Forst's motives are repeated up or down entire octaves, rather than step-wise, or in smaller leaps. Lines 1 through 3 contain examples of these octave leaps, particularly reflected in motive c. A sequence closer to the traditional musical sense can be found in lines 20 and 21, at the start of the B section (see fig. 5.7). In this example, there is a statement of a motivic idea and a literal repetition transposed up a fourth. However, these types of sequences are rare within this piece.

By understanding the types of patterns that occur in this piece and the overall divisions of phrases and sections, a performer could best determine how to parse out sections for individual study. The recognition of recurring material also would help to facilitate faster learning, through an understanding of which motives are directly repeated and which motives are varied (and how the motives are varied). *Sequences* is atonal and it may prove more challenging to learn than Forst's earlier works. The recognition of patterns and how they are varied may be the most reliable musical characteristic for a harpist as they are learning this piece. Although extended techniques do not appear frequently within this piece, their precise placement—which is usually limited to only one or two instances—may help serve as additional guideposts for a performer.

Sequences within the Context of Late-Twentieth-Century Solo Harp Literature

The change in Forst's compositional style is largely consistent with musical trends in harp writing during the late 1960s and '70s. Composers of harp music were using a far more experimental approach than their predecessors from the 1940s and '50s. Tonality was far less emphasized and extended techniques were incorporated more for their percussive qualities. Perhaps the most famous example of this shift is Berio's *Sequenza II* for harp, which was published in 1966. Within *Sequenza II*, Berio implemented a battery of extended techniques,

sharp contrasts of dynamic extremes, and starkly atonal harmonic language that aided in breaking the harp's previous Romantic and Impressionistic connection.[6] Berio's *Sequenza II* shares similarities with Forst's *Sequences* in only one regard—it does not use sequencing in a traditional musical sense, but seems more aligned with the non-musical definition.

Other composers also were pushing the previous limits of harp writing by incorporating serialism and other compositional techniques into their works, as noted by Evelyn Iversen. Gunther Schuller's *Fantasy for Solo Harp* (1969) employs twelve-tone methods and combinatoriality, while Ami Ma'ayani's *Toccata for Harp* includes pitch-class sets.[7] On the other hand, some composers during this period were employing more conventional writing methods, while finding other means of creating a more modern sound. Benjamin Britten's *Suite for Harp*, Op. 83 (1969) was modeled after the Baroque suite. Britten added other modernized aspects, as can be observed in the third movement, *Nocturne,* in which Britten employed Phrygian harmonies to add an upper leading tone so that the tonic could be approached from either direction.[8] Whether or not composers were writing in entirely new ways or blending new and old methods, nearly all of the works for solo harp emerging during the 1950s and '60s were experimental in one way or another.

Forst's *Sequences* follows a similar experimental vein, when compared to his other works. There are aspects of *Sequences* that seem similar to Berio's approach within his *Sequenzas*, where core motivic ideas are repeated, with modified octave placements and rhythmic proportions. There are also a few instances where Forst adds or subtracts notes from

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[6] Kirsty Whatley, "Rough Romance: Sequenza II for Harp as a Study and Statement," in *Berio's Sequenzas,* ed. Janet K. Halfyard (Hampshire, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007), 39, 41-42.
[7] Evelyn Iversen, "A Brief Historical Survey of the Harp and Its Literature With an Analysis of Selected Harp Compositions From the Mid-Twentieth Century to The Present" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1981), 35, 67.
[8] Linda Warren, "Britten's Suite for Harp: Analysis and Study Guide," *The American Harp Journal* 7, no. 3 (Summer 1980): 16-17.

melodic figures, like Berio. However, Forst's approach seems less formulaic, and when compared to *Sequenza II,* he makes less use of extended techniques. With the elimination of bar lines and an atonal harmonic structure, *Sequences* shows that Forst's musical approach to harp composition had changed significantly since the 1940s. It also demonstrates that Forst was able to produce works comparable to the stylistic trends around him at the time, while maintaining his own independent style.

Conclusion

Through my examination of *Sequences,* it is clear that Forst's approach to harp composition changed immensely, matching the changes in trends around him. It is far removed from Forst's past links to tonality, though we have no clues as to what might have led to its creation. In the next chapter, I will present the summary of my findings and make my concluding remarks on Forst's overall stylistic approach to the harp, based on my analysis of his harp solos and the limited amount of available information about Forst's music. I also will present my recommendations for further study.

Chapter Six

Summary and Suggestions for Further Research

Summary of Analyses

This study examines Forst's works for harp and begins to place his music into the broader context of twentieth-century harp literature. To accomplish this end, I examined several scholarly sources regarding general developments in American classical music and harp literature during much of the twentieth century. My intention was to understand the eclectic array of influences that American composers like Forst would have been exposed to during the mid-twentieth century. Then, I was able to analyze Forst's solo works for harp, keeping this general breadth of knowledge in mind. With these intersecting research points, I can conclude that Forst's musical style seems relatively consistent with trends in harp literature during the time when his works were written. Influences on Forst's earliest harp solo would have included training in German traditions through his studies with Daniel Gregory Mason at Columbia, while the increase in non-German influences during the 1920s would have exposed him to other musical styles and techniques, particularly those used by French composers.

This post-1920s influence is particularly prevalent in *Homage to Ravel* and Forst's works based on *A Child's Garden of Verses* from the 1940s. Within these works, French Impressionism and a less traditional harmonic language are noticeable; they are vaguely tonal, contain non-functional seventh chords, employ modal scales, and feature non-cadential chord progressions. However, these works generally do not make great use of augmented harmonies, nor do they employ whole-tone scales, as might be expected in an Impressionistic work. They are not completely tonal, as chord relationships are not always diatonic within a key or tonal center and Forst avoided strong cadences, like V-I. In Forst's works based on *A Child's Garden of Verses*,

he employed musical devices to evoke images from the text, which is a trait of Impressionism, but such devices do not rise to the same level as the works of Claude Debussy, the representative composer of Impressionist music.

Forst's melodies are short and simple, and blend easily with the other elements. His rhythms also tend to be straightforward, reflecting standard subdivisions; more complex rhythmic devices, such as cross-rhythms, are not present in Forst's works. Forst did experiment more in *Land of Nod*, employing more rhythmic and harmonic variety. However, it was never published, which leaves us to wonder if he was not completely satisfied with the final manuscript, or if he was planning to rework it for later publication.

Forst's *Sequences* also matches the trends that were taking place in harp literature during the late 1960s and '70s. As other composers were experimenting with aspects of serialism and other modern compositional devices, Forst also departed far from his tonal roots with *Sequences*, which is markedly atonal by comparison. However, he was still relatively conservative in his overall compositional approach. The structural and rhythmic content of *Sequences* is vastly different from his previous works, eliminating the bar lines for a more open scoring and incorporating a wider array of subdivisions. However, it is not evident that Forst was employing any compositional techniques like serialism in *Sequences*, and upon detailed examination, it appears to be mostly built on the premise of repeating various motivic, rhythmic, and harmonic ideas, in varying manners. However, when one compares this piece to Forst's earlier works, it is clear that his compositional style is vastly different from his style of the 1940s.

Despite the stylistic differences within Forst's solo harp works between 1940 and 1972, there are aspects of Forst's writing that remained constant. In nearly all of Forst's works, he seems to have favored two-note melodic fragments, except for *Homage to Ravel.* Forst's

Homage to Ravel and works based on Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* are all rather short and are not overly complex in their structure. They are usually through-composed or ABA, feature short melodies, and have clear tonal centers. They all contain experimental qualities to some degree, but remain accessible to a wide audience.

Although *Sequences* is drastically different in some musical ways, it still follows a loose ABA form and maintains Forst's preference for short motives. Its harmonic language is relatively simple, and even though it is atonal, Forst adhered to specific chord types within each section. Although it is a longer work, it does not venture into complex forms or sections of development.

Thus, based on currently available information, my assertion is that Forst was a composer who incorporated musical trends occurring around him, but maintained an aspect of conservatism or traditionalism. For example, his use of extended techniques was limited to those required to generate specific effects. His harmonic language was partly forward-thinking, and partly rooted in the past. He balanced experimentation with simpler forms, an approach that produced effective results in all of his works. This balance between innovation and tradition resulted in works that are appealing. They are compelling, neither sounding too experimental nor too dated.

In addition to balancing traditional and experimental compositional techniques, Forst's solo harp works are well-written from a harpist's perspective; they are well-marked, fingered intuitively, and do not require substantial editing on the part of the player.[1] Their harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic content makes them as interesting to play as they are to listen to and they could be successfully incorporated in programs. Furthermore, Forst's works based on *A Child's*

[1] Not all works for solo harp are marked as well as Forst's works and it is often the case that harpists must significantly edit scores to enhance playability.

Garden of Verses could also be programmed as a single set of works. Forst's solos for harp can be technically demanding in some places, particularly in *Sequences,* but they do not require harpists to alter their technique or overexert themselves. Forst's harp solos from the 1940s are within the musical and technical capabilities of a late-intermediate or early-advanced-level student. *Sequences,* which is perhaps the most technically complex, requires a slightly higher level of playing, making it well suited for advanced study.

Suggestions for Further Research and Concluding Remarks

Through this study, I have been able to make some assessments about Forst's musical style and begin to place his harp music within the broader context of twentieth-century harp literature. However, further study is still needed in order to understand if the stylistic characteristics observed in his harp works are representative of his general musical style. Even though this study was focused solely on Forst's solo works for harp, I believe that his overall musical style warrants attention, given how many of his non-harp works received accolades, particularly his symphonies. The best way to accomplish this would be to examine his works beyond the solo harp literature. Only when his overall musical style is understood can we truly place Forst within the broader context of twentieth-century music.

Further, although I am familiar with Forst's music, I have gained little additional information about who he was as a person. Through my research, I have uncovered a tremendous amount of evidence that Forst was well-connected to prominent figures in New York City, despite his eventual disappearance from nearly every discussion of American music. He may not have had long-standing influence on later composers, but he certainly knew those who did. Leonard Bernstein, Quincy Porter, Elizabeth Sprague-Coolidge, Carlos Salzedo, and Lucile Lawrence were just a few of the prominent musicians with whom he was associated. One

potential area for further research would be to explore his relationships with these individuals and how they may have influenced his work (or vice versa). From a few scattered notes, we know that Forst consulted Lucile Lawrence on at least one or two of his harp solos, but his compositional interactions with other prominent musicians remain unverified. The Yale repository contains letters from Forst to Quincy Porter and John Kirkpatrick, two prominent musicians and faculty members at Yale.[2] Locating and examining Forst's own personal archive may also increase our understanding of Forst, as well as potentially uncovering more manuscripts.

Another aspect of Forst's career that should be examined more closely is his apparent hiatus from composing. While Forst did not publish any additional harp works between 1944 to 1972, it also appears that he was not actively publishing any original works between 1947 and the 1960s. According to WorldCat, the last original work by Forst from the 1940s was *Riders to the Sea* (a one-act opera) which was published in 1947. Between 1948 and 1953, it seems Forst was primarily editing or transcribing works by other composers. Both WorldCat and the New York Public Library indicate that Forst resumed publishing original works sometime in the 1960s.[3]

The posthumous publication of Forst's works creates a barrier to fully understanding Forst's actual period of productivity, as we cannot be certain when a work was actually written unless it is clearly marked on the score.[4] If Forst was taking a hiatus from composing, what was

[2] The Yale repository informed me that because of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, they were limiting archive access to Yale students, faculty, and staff only, and that access for outside researchers would open after the pandemic was declared to be over. As far as I know, the Yale repository is the only archive that contains letters from Forst. The New York Public Library did not seem to have any archives of Forst's papers within their library system.
[3] The New York Public Library date several of Forst's works as "1960? – 1969?," which indicates that the exact date of publication is unknown, but is possibly within that time frame. The earliest known date of publication for Forst's works in the 1960s is 1965.
[4] Many of Forst's works were published posthumously from 1976 through 1990.

he doing in the meantime? Was Forst's painting career—an aspect even less understood than his career in music—part of the reason, or was it something else? Or, given that *Land of Nod* remained unpublished, could it be that Forst was still composing between 1948 and 1960, but simply did not premier or publish these works? Based on discussions with former students of Lucile Lawrence, including Elizabeth Richter,[5] it is possible that Forst wrote a solo harp work based on "The Lamplighter," another poem from Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses.* If other works like this exist, locating them and bringing them to light for study or performance could help to provide a more accurate understanding of Forst's productivity period.

Forst's painting career, while not directly related to this study, is another aspect of his career that warrants investigation. According to a brief unpublished biography of Forst, Forst's paintings were prized at one time and were displayed at several galleries around the world, including the Safad Museum in Israel.[6] Currently, only one painting by Forst is known, and it resides in the house of an art dealer in Hudson, New York. What happened to his other paintings? Are there still museums that have his works on display? Based on the photograph of the painting in Hudson, it seems evident that Forst's painting style, which was a loose representation of its title, might have correlated with his musical style. Would other paintings demonstrate a similar correlation?

Lastly, my hope is that this study will increase interest in lesser known solo harp works by other American composers who were active during the mid-twentieth century. Whether they are worthy of study is yet to be determined, but regardless of their appeal, these works are part of the harp's history, and despite the significant amount of general research regarding harp

[5] A manuscript for *The Lamplighter* has been mentioned several times in discussions with Professor Richter.
[6] "Forst Biography," annotated, photocopy of a typed document, with hand-written edits by Lucile Lawrence, in the possession of Elizabeth Richter, Muncie, IN.

literature, the works of mid-twentieth century American composers remain neglected (see Appendix A). As seen in the case of Rudolf Forst's solo works for harp, there may be others like them within the overlooked literature, waiting to be brought to light.

APPENDIX A: A Select List of Lesser-Known Solo Harp Works by American Composers from 1900 to 1980

The following list is intended to be a reference for harpists who wish to explore the lesser-known body of solo harp works. Because this study was focused on Rudolf Forst, an American-born composer active between the mid-1930s and 1972, I applied this same principle when compiling works for this appendix. The following works are all by composers that I could confirm were born in the United States and were actively composing solo harp works between 1900 and 1980. Additionally, while a few of these works may have been performed or recorded at least once, the information that is available seems to indicate that performances of these works do not occur frequently or widely in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, these works have not received scholarly investigation.

This list is not intended to endorse or promote these works, but merely to increase awareness of their existence. For each work, I have indicated whether it is available for purchase. If a work is not available for purchase, then I indicate whether it is available through Interlibrary Loan or available through another online archive or database, like the International Music Score Library Project (more commonly referred to as IMSLP). If there is a recording available, that information is also provided. The majority of these entries were extracted from Mark Palkovic's *Harp Music Bibliography*, while WorldCat and the American Composers Alliance helped to provide additional entries. An internet search helped in locating websites selling scores and recordings, if those things were available. In instances where details concerning publisher information remains elusive, as much information is given as is possible.

Alexander, Josef. *Three Ludes for Harp.* New York: General Music, 1971. Three movements, "Pre-", "Inter-", and "Post-". Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

Amlin, Martin. *L'intrique des Accordes Oublies.* New York: Seesaw Music, 1977. Available for purchase and through Interlibrary Loan.

Andrews, Joel. *Variations on Come, Ye Sons of Art.* New York: G. Schirmer, 1966. Available for purchase and through Interlibrary Loan. A recording from 1966 is available for purchase.

Bolcom, William. *Phrygia*. New York: E.B. Marks, 1966. Available for purchase and through Interlibrary Loan.

Britain, Radie. *Anima Divina.* New York: Seesaw Music, 1973. Available for purchase and through Interlibrary Loan. A recording from 1972 is located in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and could be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Reflections*. Hollywood: R. B. Brown Music Co., 1966. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

Cameron, William Truesdale. *Americana 928.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d.[7] Currently unavailable for purchase or loan.

----------. *Ballade (Meditation).* New York: Lyon and Healy, 1938. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Caprice Troubadour.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Colgan-Fasset.* Washington, D. C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Dance Rhumba Dance.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Dragonfly.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Drifting Snow.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, 1939. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Etude in G major.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Evensong.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Furioso.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Hummingbird.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *In The Favor of God.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Intermezzo.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Moods of Spring.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

[7] Although the majority of William Truesdale Cameron's compositional publication dates are unknown, his obituary in *The Washington Post* indicates that he died in 1977.

----------. *Nocturne.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Petite Gallop.* Chicago: Lyon and Healy, n.d. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Premier Melodie.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Reverie.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, 1975. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Rodeo.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Romance.* Chicago: Lyon and Healy, 1937. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Serenade.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Song of The Bells.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Spooks, Ghosts, and Goblins.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Springtime-Caprice.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Tarantella.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

----------. *Water-Gate Caprice.* Washington, D.C.: William Truesdale Cameron, n.d. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

Capanna, Robert. *Phorminx.* New York: G. Schirmer, 1975. Available for purchase and through Interlibrary Loan.

Cella, Theodore. *Danza Fantastica.* New York: International Music, 1919. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Pagano Poeta.* New York: International Music, 1922. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through IMSLP or Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Pensiero Lontano.* New York: International Music, 1917. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Rondo Capriccioso.* International Music, 1922. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *A Moment of Music: From The Weekend Suite*. New York: International Music, 1923. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

Covello, Stephen. *Etude for Harp*. New York: Lyra Music, 1973. Available for purchase and through Interlibrary Loan.

Creston, Paul. *Lydian Song.* New York: Ricordi, 1961. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

----------. *Olympia: Rhapsody for Solo Harp.* New York: G. Schirmer, 1968. Available for purchase and through Interlibrary Loan.

Curtis-Smith, Curtis. *Three Pieces.* 1976. Currently not available for purchase or loan.

David, Annie Louise. *Chorale in The Style of Handel.* Chicago: Composer's Press, 1960. Currently not available for purchase but can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

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